

GROWING IN FAITH: THE RULE OF LIFE
A BASIC, BALANCED RESOURCE FOR THE ANGLICAN DISCIPLE OF JESUS
CHRIST

A THESIS-PROJECT
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To my dearest husband Douglas,

co-worker in ministry

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

—*Acts 2: 42, NRSV*

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PREFACE

As a youth, I was part of a Baptist youth group where we were encouraged to read books by authors such as Roland Allen, A.W. Tozer, and C.S. Lewis. These writers helped me to see how God was at work in his Church, and how the Church was God's way of spreading the good news about Jesus throughout the world. As part of that Church, I continued to be interested about how Christians could be strengthened in their faith so that their lives would be a good testimony to the Gospel.

It has been a valuable opportunity to be in a cohort of Christian leaders from North America and beyond, in the Doctor of Ministry programme at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, in the area of Church Planting and Multiplication. It has been of lasting benefit to study under professors grounded in the evangelical expression of the Gospel, who yearn for the Church to be biblical in its evangelization of the world.

Time with such leaders furthered my thinking about what it means for me and my congregation to be biblically faithful Anglican Christians, true to the Gospel and the One who has revealed it to us in the scriptures, while also remaining true to our Anglican heritage as a reformed, and reforming, Anglican expression of the faith. It has given me both time and encouragement to examine the Rule of Life as an important resource for engaging all members of the congregation in our own personal growth in faith, by encouraging us to form daily habits that support our ongoing daily walk with Jesus.

I offer these thoughts on the Rule of Life as an encouragement to Anglicans who love the Anglican Church and want to build up Anglican Christians so that the world will recognize that we are followers of Jesus, and be drawn to Jesus themselves.

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I would like to thank the Rev. Dr. Ray Pendleton, the Rev. Dr. Sam Schutz, and the Rev. Dr. Tom Herrick for their leadership during the Doctor of Ministry programme in Church Planting and Multiplication. Their wisdom and knowledge gave me the needed encouragement to pursue the question of how to encourage Anglican Christians to build the personal habit of discipleship into their daily life, and thus provide a base for healthy church planting.

In addition, I would like to thank those clergy in the Anglican Network in Canada who took the time to answer the questionnaire that I sent out to all ANiC rectors and church planters in Canada and the USA. It was helpful to get a picture of discipleship in the Anglican Network in Canada, to verify some of my expectations and to inform me further on what is happening in the churches.

I am indebted to the people of St. Chad's Anglican Church, Toronto (ANiC), who have allowed me to be their Rector for the past eight years (and even before that, within the Anglican Church of Canada). They have been so helpful and encouraging to me as I combined my Doctor of Ministry studies with the daily tasks of parish ministry. I thank them for their support and also for allowing me to have two months in summer 2015 to do some concentrated writing for this thesis-project, and for their able leadership of the parish during that time.

Finally, I would like to thank my husband and our family for all of their support. It is challenging to do such work along with the care of the parish, and while seeking to be faithful in my role as wife, mother and grandmother.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACiC:	the Anglican Coalition in Canada
ACNA:	the Anglican Church in North America
ACoC:	the Anglican Church of Canada
AMiC:	the Anglican Mission in Canada
ANiC:	the Anglican Network in Canada
ASA:	Average Sunday Attendance
BCP:	the Book of Common Prayer
ESV:	the English Standard Version of the Bible
NIV:	the New International Version of the Bible
NRSV:	the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible

ABSTRACT

In this thesis-project I explore the desirability and benefits for Anglican Christians to form and yearly assess a personal Rule of Life. The last question in the Supplementary Instruction of the Catechism in the Book of Common Prayer 1962 Canada asks, “What is the vocation of a Christian in this world?” The answer involves making a periodic review of the Rule of Life, according to the pattern described on page 555 of that book. I show how such a practice agrees with scripture and church history, and how it may also profitably form part of a solid foundation for the necessary growth of our Anglican Network in Canada parishes in building Biblically faithful, Gospel sharing, Anglican churches.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY CONTEXT

Background

I grew up in the village of Swansea on the south west border of Toronto. Swansea had been incorporated as a village in 1925, and was one square mile in area, with four churches that worked together co-operatively. The village was incorporated into Toronto, along with other boroughs, in 1954, but retained its own personality. For many, it provided a stable environment of family, church, and school, in which to grow up. Few people moved away. They knew one another, especially those who went to the same church. In Sunday School, we learned the catechism (the Westminster Shorter Catechism), and the youth were generally retained in the church.

My interest in how to develop discipleship has come about gradually over a number of years. Questions about how Anglican Church members grow in their faith have been present, perhaps under the surface, from the beginning of my connection with the Anglican Church.

It goes back to the early 1960's. I lived in a village that was located on the south west side of Toronto (and would be amalgamated with Toronto in 1967). The municipality was small, about one square mile, and had its own village council and reeve, library and public school. There were four churches in Swansea, Presbyterian, Baptist, United, and Anglican. In my early teens, I switched from attending the Presbyterian Church to go to a Baptist Church outside the village, but close by. Having made a

profession of faith at age fifteen, I started to be interested in what the various churches were teaching, and particularly because of a good friend attending the Anglican Church, was interested in what her faith meant to her. Much later, she would have an experience with God that transformed her life, and the life of her husband as well, just as he was in the process of being ordained in the Anglican Church. But in the early 1960's, all I could see of the local Anglican expression of faith was that it was a place for the most affluent families in the village to attend, and that their youth group did socials and went out on social outreach projects. This troubled me, and was the first sense I had that someone should share faith in Jesus Christ with them. That particular church has remained in my thoughts even until now. How is it possible to have a church that has programmes and outreach, and yet its members have no interest in a life of balanced discipleship?

However, I would see that a highly liturgical church, which was quite foreign to my childhood upbringing, was not that much different from a church that was congregational, and boasted no 'vain repetition' in their Sunday service. The problem of expressing our faith all the time, every day, was the same. It made no sense for someone in a liturgical church to live a balanced Christian life, because at that time, church meant mostly attending the service each Sunday and being seen. It was an expected part of the culture. Similarly, in a congregational setting, the Sunday service was very important, and except for some programmes during the week, there was not much said about how Christians are to live as followers of Jesus every day. The Baptist practice at that time of a daily 'quiet time' was the closest a person could get to any kind of regular spiritual practice, but with little instruction in what this meant, and little teaching about how it carried over into daily life, it did not get carried out regularly by the congregation.

How to live a disciplined Christian life did not get any easier as the years went by. With marriage and children, the same concern that I had had as a teenager was still there in the next two decades, and found some answers, first, in running neighbourhood Bible studies in the same area in which I had grown up, and then, in attending and leading church-based fellowship groups at an evangelical Anglican church that we had decided to attend. Some of the same problems that I had seen in congregational settings were also in small group settings, and so questions about how to live as a follower of Jesus were still left unanswered in my mind. How do Christians who enjoy getting together for weekly Bible study and prayer actually carry through in their daily life, following Jesus? If anything, the distractions were greater than they had been back in one's teenage years.

In a number of ways, God guided me to go back to theological studies. Even during my studies the question of how congregations can grow spiritually was on my mind, and during this time, I did more work on the small group idea that, by now, was being more widely used in some evangelical Anglican churches. I had by this time decided that I would base my ministry priorities on the picture of church as given in the second chapter of Acts:

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved (Acts 2: 42-47 [NRSV]).

With this picture in mind, I would aim for a balanced approach of worship, prayer, outreach and evangelism. But there still remained the challenge of serving the church so

that individual members would develop spiritually, and not tread water, or worse, drift away.

Growing up with these kinds of experiences was a blessing. However, it did not prepare me for the many changes that would come in Toronto because of its growth. The city developed in population and diversity, so that today, in 2016, it is the largest city in Canada, and its inhabitants speak over one hundred and forty languages. When I began ordained ministry I went to Newfoundland, where the town in which I lived had many similar characteristics to the Village of Swansea where I grew up. The churches were strong (there were four of them) and were a social hub for the residents. Leading a church in such a location as Fortune, Newfoundland, was a good fit for me. People had similar expectations of how their week would be lived, and opportunities for spiritual growth were accepted. The church and its ministries grew.

In 1995 my family and I returned to Ontario, and eventually in 2001 I transferred to the local Anglican diocese that served Toronto and the areas that surrounded it. I served as part of a deanery that included the Anglican Church located in Swansea, but the situation in West Toronto was now very different from my childhood years. The Anglican Church of Canada was shrinking and people did not know how to change the trajectory. Solutions were presented and attempted, but the decline continued. At that point, I began to wonder how a thriving Anglican expression of the Christian faith might develop. Having come to the Anglican Church as an adult, I appreciated its comprehensiveness and the central place it gave to the scriptures and to Jesus' sacrifice for us. It was a good vehicle for witnessing to the Christian faith.

The Problem Presenting Itself

The church to which I was assigned by Bishop Finlay of Toronto was called St. Chad's Earls court. I was sent there to do the Sunday service, and 'to care for the spiritual health and well-being' of the members. It was a part-time position. There were ten people present at the first service I conducted. I did not have much information about the parish situation, but I did have time to meet people and pray. The question I asked as I got to know the people was: is this a church that is spiritually alive? Thinking about this question, I reflected that if the church were spiritually dead, it should be given a decent burial, but if there was life, that life should be nurtured. There was life, and the congregation would grow to about fifty people. There were also significant problems that had to be addressed, and spiritual opposition that was making this difficult. Having regular meetings with the diocese, I assumed that there would be help to address the problems so that the growth that was happening would continue. Without going into detail, somewhere in all of this, I had failed to appreciate that the diocese had a different vision of the church than I had, and it was developing a diocese that would be a leader in a 'progressive' view that the church should be in the forefront of the surrounding society's beliefs, whereas on our church sign, we designated ourselves as a 'biblically faithful parish.' The question of how to develop members that were growing faithfully as Jesus' followers was always in my mind. How was that possible in a situation where we were operating under a different understanding of what church is, and what it does? So it became no surprise to observe our parish being hindered in its mission by this conflict, a conflict that was always present, and which focused on a different understanding of three

things: our understanding of mission, our understanding of stewardship of our physical building, and our understanding of our stewardship of money.

For four or five years, then, I was asking the questions and discussing them with the parish leadership, and looking for ways to be faithful as followers of Jesus. Along the way, God brought into our parish life some wonderful resource people, not from the diocese, but just from those who were interested in this ministry, or who were developing from within the parish. Also, there were a couple of Anglican resources, a local Anglican Renewal Movement, which sent a team to us about twice a year for special services, and my ongoing involvement in The Anglican Essentials Movement, which was growing and making plans to assist parishes that were on a different path than their own dioceses. These resources identified what church was and what it should be doing, in ways similar to how I was thinking. It was good for me and for the parish members to be able to meet others who were on the same path. It encouraged us not to give up. So, as I reflect on that time period, even with all the distractions that were trying to keep us from doing what God wanted (and we learned to identify them first through our failure to resist them, and then through God's grace in showing them to be mere distractions that we should not focus on), God was showing us, in the midst of pressure, what it means to be disciples. We learned to see that one benefit of our being under pressure from the diocese was so that we could witness to our faith in Jesus. And so, for example, one time I was called in and faced with having to answer a question about which I had been praying. God had not yet shown me the answer, so I could not give the bishop the answer he wanted. He was perturbed when I said I would continue to pray about it, being sure that I would have an answer in God's time. He did not understand (and said so) why I had to pray about it at

all. That was both a time of learning, and a time of witness, and it required courage for me to say it. The strength to do it came from the Lord.

Everything progressed in the diocese, and across the country, to the point where Anglican Essentials developed more formally with a plan to assist parishes in need of rescue from impossible situations. I, along with other leaders, allied myself with the newly forming Anglican Network in Canada (ANiC), and how that developed was another stage in my discovery of what it involves living my life as a disciple of Jesus. It involves suffering, and it involves great peace and joy. This period of time was scary and exciting, but during it, God provided me with wisdom and courage that I had not experienced previously. Of course, as I reflect on it, that is what growing in discipleship involves.

The Problem Continuing

With all of these thoughts raising questions in my mind, and with, as the apostle Paul has identified, “concern for all the churches” (2 Corinthians 11: 28 [NIV]), then came another concern about the integrity of the denomination in which I was serving. That led to our church leaving that denomination and becoming part of the Network (ANiC), where the questions still remained. And that would eventually lead to Gordon-Conwell and the Doctor of Ministry programme, in which I could continue to ask questions, be challenged, and think more about how to address the questions in my current parish.

We held a vote in 2008 to join the Anglican Network in Canada. The vote occurred on a stormy Sunday in February, in which a number of members were hindered from attending, since the roads and sidewalks were coated with thick ice. There was a certain amount of intrigue at the meeting, where some, including an honorary assistant, who had indicated agreement, changed their mind. One member asked, if the vote does not go in favour of the Network, what will you do? I said, I will leave, because that is how God is guiding me. I knew that I had done what I could to show people the issues, and knew that if they chose not to follow, it was not because I had not done my work, but because they had chosen freely not to follow, and that was a matter between them and God. The vote won by just a couple of votes, and so I declared it carried. I knew there would be tough times ahead in the next few days. No one who valued their own security would do what we had done, but here again, I knew that God was teaching me the value of trusting him for everything.

The part of St. Chad's that voted in favour of joining the Anglican Network in Canada was locked out of its building within about two weeks of our vote. For the new parish, the customary structures of church life, centred in a particular building, were gone. The members who walked away from their building had been built up in the five years previous, due to teaching on what it means to be 'church,' and the implementation of two programmes—the seasonally repeated Alpha courses and the monthly community suppers with a modified worship service.

Now, with everything gone—building, supplies, and also a number of members who did not join the ANiC—the remaining members were effectively starting over, with

a much reduced stability of place (a central worship space was necessary due to the unavailability at that time of members' homes to hold meetings).

The congregation did bring with it a developed understanding of what it means to be church—worshipping together weekly, reaching out with the Gospel and also with help appropriate to the area where the people met together. This meant that Alpha could still run, but instead of the monthly supper/service, we supported a local Christian food bank.

However, since we now added to the congregation other people that travel a distance so they can attend an ANiC parish, it became more difficult to provide the kind of small group Bible study that we had done. People came from congregations where there may have not been a developed process of discipleship. We did not have mid-week scheduled space in our Sunday rental situation, and hardly anyone lived in a house that could/would host a small group. With the formation of the Anglican Network in Canada, the resources which we had previously with Anglican Essentials, were not the resources that we needed now, and the Network was in its infancy, unable to provide any of the resources that now might need to develop. We did have, though, a strong faith in God who had worked among us in other difficult circumstances, and we believed the little saying that one of the Anglican bishops in the North often said: where God guides, God provides. It is similar to something that Hudson Taylor said: “God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supplies” (Lyll 1965, 37). The Northern bishop trusted God in that very way, in a difficult ministry location where resources were scarce. The quote is true to what the scriptures say, and we were to grow in our appreciation of that truth, and grow in our faith as we experienced it ourselves.

As things developed, there were better opportunities for rental space and hospitality in homes, but we were now also faced with our members' varied work schedules/sports. It seemed that we could not find times that would be good for more than two to four people. Because of this, we developed the options for groups that were made up of three or four people, and set up a plan to encourage them to develop as Christians with a balanced discipleship.

I still observed an imbalance of Christian growth, and short courses (such as Anglican churches might hold in Advent or Lent) were fine at the time, but did not seem to carry through consistently for the rest of the year.

I asked other clergy what resources they were using, and found nothing that answered my question: is there an Anglican resource available to foster ongoing discipleship among members of the Anglican Network in Canada? Was there a plan that could be commended to Network Christians that would be biblically faithful, solidly nurturing, and able to be incorporated simply and easily into one's daily life?

In searching for a solution to this, I discovered a resource within the Book of Common Prayer (BCP). We had been graciously given fifty copies of the Canadian BCP by the Prayer Book Society, and we were using it more than we had in our old location. Sometimes we have resources at hand, but do not realize they are there. This is what happened. One year I was looking at the catechism in the BCP, because someone was going to be confirmed. I read at the end of it a brief paragraph about The Rule of Life. It was a great discovery for me. If I had seen it before, its significance had not made an impression on me. I decided that if the congregation were to keep the Rule of Life uppermost in its life, as a summary statement of what discipleship is all about, and a

framework for how they viewed their own calling as disciples, it might be able to develop a balanced corporate discipleship and sustain it. I had observed that courses or special days addressing spiritual growth may run periodically in churches, but between those times, generally, there is a gradual lessening of momentum. As members of the Network, we are also founding members of the new (founded in 2009) Anglican Church in North America (ACNA). The ACNA had a catechism, published in 2014, which like other such catechisms, can be used with new people. However, once they have enrolled and done the sessions, the same lack of growth can be observed. Catechisms hold a valuable place, but behind them there needs to be a sustained personal habit of Christian growth and discipleship. That is why the paragraph on The Rule of Life, which I discovered on page 555 of the Canadian BCP, seemed to offer an answer to the problem:

Every Christian man and woman should from time to time frame for himself a Rule of Life in accordance with the precepts of the Gospel and the faith and order of the Church; wherein he may consider the following:

- The regularity of his attendance at public worship and especially at the Holy Communion.
 - The practice of private prayer, Bible-reading, and self-discipline.
 - Bringing the teaching and example of Christ into his everyday life.
 - The boldness of his spoken witness to his faith in Christ.
 - His personal service to the Church and the community
 - The offering of money according to his means for the support of the work of the Church at home and overseas.
- (BCP Canada 1962, 555)

Growing in Faith: Developing a Personal Rule of Life for the Anglican Disciple of Jesus Christ, in the Context of the Worshipping Community

The title of my Thesis-Project is: Growing in Faith: The Rule of Life, a Basic, Balanced Resource for the Anglican Disciple of Jesus Christ. As I began at Gordon

Conwell, initially I had been thinking generally about how a congregation develops, and how the church grows in Christian maturity, numbers and financial accountability. How do churches thrive and grow in a way that is consistent with the Gospel, and not just take on an entrepreneurial business model that promises growth apart from any real spiritual maturity? How do they thrive and be involved in planting other congregations? If the Network is to grow, what will have to be in place for growth to be genuine?

While my main concern is for the spiritual growth of the parish in which I serve, I thought it would be good to get a sense of how other Network clergy are dealing with the development of their congregations in spiritual maturity. Perhaps the problem that I was seeing was localized, just to the parish of St. Chad's. In order to find out, I composed a brief, anonymous questionnaire which was sent out electronically to every clergy or lay leader of every parish in the Anglican Network of Canada, and also to the Bishops. The information coming from this questionnaire will be described in chapter four of this paper.

Then, in addition, coming out of my thoughts on addressing this problem at the parish level, came the idea for a short six-chapter resource booklet which describes and expands upon the six-point Rule of Life found in the Book of Common Prayer 1962 Canada. This will be a tool for discipleship in the parish that will be available for use in addition to any pre-evangelism, Alpha, and Home Group system that fits the balanced description of growth that the Rule of Life describes. The booklet will deal with topics such as community worship, private prayer, daily life, testimony, service (both in the body of Christ and in the world), and stewardship of resources. It will relate to the

parish's ongoing resources, which includes study of appropriate literature, discussion with Anglican leaders, and observation of current Anglican practice.

I want to provide a simple, balanced resource for beginning and continuing discipleship in an Anglican context, using Anglican resources, in order to further the continuity of the Anglican expression of the Christian faith, which is one expression by which the Church of God has been built, and continues to be built up. Because this Rule of Life is found in the Prayer Book in the supplementary material for use with those who are preparing for confirmation, the first time in their life that this resource may be used is with people who are inquiring about confirmation, whether adults or younger people. Because the description given in the Prayer Book states that the Rule of Life should periodically be considered, this resource can also be used for special times of reflection—for example, as a Lenten study. Because the Rule of Life is a balanced overview of the various disciplines that are involved in Christian discipleship, the resource can be used by leaders of Growth Groups and by those who are planning the worship services, to assist in achieving balance in the teaching and areas of service throughout the church year. As one finds with clear congregational statements of mission and vision, the various topics of the Rule of Life as found in the Canadian BCP can help to guide the church as it considers and prays about its choices for ministry growth, by identifying what a healthy church looks like.

The Context and Setting

Those who are involved in my project of making the Rule of Life central to how we understand our growth in discipleship as members of St. Chad's include Anglican Christians and leaders of my parish. The intended participant in this project is the parish, which would include both its members and those who come as inquirers. The diocese may also profit from this study, since it is only eight years old, and, as the National Director of the Network (ANiC) indicated to me, the Network is in need of appropriate Canadian literature for the growing number of parishes, which currently (in 2016) numbers seventy parishes, in various stages of formation, more than one hundred and eighty clergy, and six bishops.

Because my call is to the parish in which I serve, this thesis assumes a parish setting. Its focus, including the short booklet, will serve as a parish discipleship pattern for new Christians who are thinking of becoming members of the parish, and it will also assist established members to recover an Anglican form of spirituality. The need for growth in discipleship is an area of church planting that is essential in the parish, so that the parish may have the kind of life and behaviour that is able to grow and to participate in developing new church plants. Indeed, when St. Chad's joined the Network and passed its Bylaws, one of the stated goals contained in the original description of the parish when it affiliated with the Network was its intention to be involved in church planting. The six topics that make up the BCP Rule of Life will also be of use at other times, such as an outline for a Lenten series, or as an overall way of organizing the church year. By using these six basic topics, various kinds of meetings could focus

monthly on one topic, and cover the six topics twice a year, or, could spend two consecutive months of every year on each topic (similar to the pattern Rick Warren used in establishing his congregation in California). Wardens' meetings, which are held monthly, and church council meetings, which are held four times a year, could benefit from considering some aspect of the Rule of Life at the beginning of their meeting. This kind of ordered flexibility is important to keep before the parish members what it is we are doing as a parish, and who we are as Anglican Christians. In this way, the development of this resource to help individual Anglican Christians frame their own personal Rule of Life will also form a framework to the understanding of what it means to be a company of disciples of Jesus Christ. The primary formulation of the Rule of Life is individual, but we are placed in the church, and, to be biblical, we must see discipleship lived out in community.

Rule of Life in Other Anglican Sources

Is the Rule of Life a legitimate way for us to order our life personally and together? Does it agree with the scriptures and with how the tradition has been faithfully handed down to us? I looked at a number of Anglican Prayer Books to see if there was anything comparable to the Rule of Life found on p. 555 of the 1962 Canadian BCP. The 1918 Canadian Prayer Book has no such equivalent, nor does the 1662 Prayer Book of the Church of England. The 1928 Book of Common Prayer of the United States of America does have the following, in its catechism section:

Question. What is your bounden duty as a member of the Church?

Answer. My bounden duty is to follow Christ, to worship God every Sunday in his

Church; and to work and pray and give for the spread of his kingdom.

Question. What special means does the Church provide to help you to do all these things?

Answer. The Church provides the Laying on of Hands, or Confirmation, wherein, after renewing the promises and vows of my Baptism, and declaring my loyalty and devotion to Christ as my Master, I receive the strengthening gifts of the Holy Spirit (Second Office of Instruction, Book of Common Prayer 1928, 283).

This is a very short outline of how an Anglican Christian lives a balanced life of discipleship, and points to the need of the Holy Spirit's power to do so. The Canadian BCP of 1962 expands on this, while adding the instruction that these disciplines should be reviewed periodically. This instruction is helpful because it realizes that discipleship involves submission to Jesus throughout our life, and that discipleship grows and changes. I attempted by contacting the Prayer Book Society and the Archives Department of the Anglican Church of Canada (ACoC) to find out who might have authored the Rule of Life, but was unable after a number of attempts to find an answer. It would be good to know who had written it, and what his thoughts and background were, and what documents he might have used in formulating the Rule of Life.

The 1979 Prayer Book (USA) includes the following, in its catechism:

What is the ministry of the laity?

The ministry of lay persons is to represent Christ and his Church, to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and, according to the gifts given them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world; and to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church.

What is the duty of all Christians?

The duty of all Christians is to follow Christ; to come together week by week for corporate worship; and to work, pray and give for the spread of the kingdom of God (Book of Common Prayer 1979, 855).

These questions contain points similar to the Canadian Rule of Life, without the additional exhortation to review one's actions yearly. And unless the catechism is

reviewed yearly, such teaching may fall by the wayside, especially in areas where confirmation is not a priority.

My booklet for parish use contains the following outline:

Introduction

1. Rule of Life examples in history
2. Value of a personal Rule of Life
3. Being part of the worshipping community
4. Developing a life of prayer, Bible-reading and self-discipline
5. Following the commands of Christ
6. Witnessing to my faith in Christ
7. Serving in the parish and in my local community
8. Supporting the work of the church locally and globally
9. How to write a personal Rule of Life
10. Bibliography

At the beginning of my work on the Doctor of Ministry, the new catechism of the Anglican Church in North America had not yet been published. It was released for the public in 2013, and it too has some good resources that are biblical and practical, intended to help the Anglican Christian grow in faith. It follows a classical expression of catechism that is valuable to those teaching the Christian faith. On page 100, it asks, in question 251, what is a rule of life? The answer is given: A rule of life is a devotional discipline in which I commit to grow in grace as I resist sin and temptation, and to order my worship, work, and leisure as a pleasing sacrifice to God (Romans 12: 1-2). It then asks, in question 252, why do you need a rule of life? I need a rule of life because my fallen nature is disordered, distracted, and self-centred. Because bad habits often rule my life, I need to establish godly habits that form Christ-like character. Question 253 asks, what is the Anglican rule of life? This is the answer: the Church invites me to its life of Common Prayer as a rule of life. That rule is a key part of the life of witness, service, and devotion of my time, money and possessions to God (To Be a Christian 2013, 100-101).

While I agree that we need a Rule of Life, I think that for Canadian Anglican Christians it is better to refer specifically to page 555 of the Canadian BCP, which sets out briefly and clearly not only the need for disciplined prayer, but also the other aspects of life that an Anglican Christian would do well to review periodically. This periodic review is one of the keys to developing discipleship as a habit.

The Rev. Dr. J.I. Packer is Theologian Emeritus of the Network, Professor of Theology at Regent College, Vancouver, BC, and associated with St. John's Vancouver, ANiC. Prior to the formation of the Network, he spoke in Toronto at St. Paul's Anglican Church (ACoC) on May 1, 1999, for a special event organized by the Prayer Book Society of Canada, Toronto Branch, in celebration of the 450th anniversary of the Book of Common Prayer. In that address he commended the Rule of Life summary on page 555 of the BCP:

The conclusion can be formulated as follows. As biblical Christians who are also, in the providence of God, trustees for the Book of Common Prayer, this precious aid to biblical godliness, we are under obligation to commend and defend it in the church, and to give credibility to our advocacy of it by making full use of it ourselves. The Prayer Book path of disciplined life in Christ is one that we must ourselves learn to follow – which means, to start with, taking seriously the paragraph with which the Canadian expansion of Cranmer's catechism closes:

Every Christian man or woman should from time to time frame for himself a RULE OF LIFE in accordance with the precepts of the Gospel and the faith and order of the church where in he may consider the following:

The regularity of his attendance at public worship and especially at the Holy Communion.

The practice of private prayer, Bible-reading, and self-discipline.

Bringing the teaching and example of Christ into his everyday life.

The boldness of his spoken witness to his faith in Christ.

His personal service to the Church and the community.

The offering of money according to his means for the support of the work of the church at home and overseas.

This sets us on the road – and, may I add, none of us will ever find a better pattern for private prayer and Bible-reading anywhere than that offered by the Prayer Book’s own daily offices. But this, again, is a tempting theme that time does not allow me to develop (Packer, 1999).

The Reverend Canon David Short is a Director of the Network, and Rector of St. John’s Anglican Church, Vancouver (ANiC). He wrote a pastoral letter to his congregation in 2013 just before the start of summer. In it he recommended the Rule of Life on page 555 of the BCP as a good answer to the question that he often heard from members: What does it mean to be a member of St. John’s? He quoted the Rule of Life summary found there, and then added,

‘Rule of Life’ is an unfortunate title, conjuring images of monastic asceticism and itchy clothing, or more commandments to make u feel guilty, or worse—a list of duties to tick so I can know God cannot ask any more from me. That is not what the Prayer Book intends.

Everything we do in the Christian life is in response to the grace and goodness of God. In the death of Jesus we are remade and flooded with the Holy Spirit, who spreads the love of God and the obedience to God in our hearts. It is true that most monastic orders have a ‘Rule of Life’ (usually poverty, chastity, and obedience), but the old Latin word for ‘Rule’ is ‘Regula’—which means a pattern or model to regulate our lives.

So the six principles in the BCP ‘Rule of Life’ are intended to show what a ‘cross-shaped life’ looks like. They are not meant to be read legalistically or as a means to gain God’s favour, but as a way to nourish our love for God and one another in practice precisely because we know God’s favour in Jesus Christ. They are the visible, realistic, and balanced behaviours of those who have been gripped by God’s grace.

I commend them to you for your summer meditations (Short, 1999).

It was interesting to me to read this article in which David Short was commending the Rule of Life to his congregation. Occasionally I had been in conversation by phone with his wife Bronwyn, who is a member of the Anglican Church in North America’s Catechesis Task Force, and we had discussed resources for confirmation and also the

need for something brief like the Rule of Life summary in the BCP, to help all church members have a focus on their spiritual development.

As a result of our ongoing conversation, Bronwyn had sent me the draft confirmation course that they use at St. John's, called Gospel Grounding and Growing, written by members of their church. It follows the classical catechism form, and develops it from an evangelical Anglican perspective. It has since been of use to St. Chad's in two ways—to teach a confirmation class, and to review the elements of our faith with all of St. Chad's members. The ACNA Catechism, previously mentioned, is helpful for occasional reference as applicable to this draft course. This resource from St. John's is invaluable as preparatory study and also review, to the topic of the Rule of Life.

Because the focus of my paper is a more general description of the value of a Rule of Life in an Anglican Christian's development and growth in faith, the parish booklet project is just a small part of the process. I have still not decided what kind of measurement of this booklet would be best in my parish situation. It could be that a workshop introducing the booklet may be scheduled for the members, at which they will be briefed on what the booklet contains, and then offer their thoughts and suggestions for its improvement. Along with that, I would encourage each member to update his or her own personal Rule of Life, making use of the resources in the booklet. At a further date, I would have a second workshop, where we would review the booklet's effectiveness. I could do that through the use of an evaluation questionnaire. I could also use an online survey tool to ask a few questions about how they were using the booklet and what their satisfaction level might be. The carry-over into the life of the parish would be observed (or not) whenever parish members came together.

It could be possible to do some one-on-one evaluation, but I think that a session in which the group works together best suits the personality of the parish and also our goals.

Another option I have is to involve the growth groups with evaluation. Not everyone is in a growth group, or would come to a workshop, so, practically speaking, it might have to be a combination of: workshop, growth group, and individual conversation and observation.

**The Church is Not a Machine to Be Controlled,
but a Living Entity in Which to Serve**

Having said that, I need at this point to mention a person whose work has been important to me as I consider any process for church growth. The opportunity to hear this man and his wife came during one of our Church Planting/Multiplication cohort sessions held in Boston, Massachusetts. What he said impressed me so much that I bought the book to which he referred, and read it through more than once, and recommended it to a few others (with whom I discussed it after they had read the book). The book, *The Cat and the Toaster: Living System Ministry in a Technological Age*, presented me with a key to understanding a lot of my questions about how to be and do church, and how to discern the various programmes and church growth ideas that I had been reading about since the late 1980's (first doing some research on the value of cell groups as a way of providing Christian education and fellowship for members of large churches that were noticing a problem in retaining their members or helping them grow spiritually).

The author, Dr. Douglas A. Hall, in his classes for Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary's Boston campus, would ask his students: "What is the difference between a cat and a toaster?" Students do not always like to be asked seemingly simple questions like that. As he explained to them, if something was wrong with his toaster, he would get some tools, and take the toaster apart, find out what was wrong with it, fix it or get a new part, and then reassemble the toaster. And it would work again. However, if his cat was sick, that same process would kill the cat. That is because the cat is alive. Things that people make (like toasters) are simple. It is relatively easy to construct and maintain a toaster. But things that God makes (like cats) are highly complex, interrelated systems. He says that living systems are designed to renew themselves. That is how God makes them. If we understand this, then we will approach church growth very differently. The task of the church is to co-operate with God, who has designed and made the church. He will be Lord, and show us how to lead in humility, and understand the process of discipleship.

He writes:

Aligning our actions to God's new creation is a high goal indeed. We start by acknowledging that we live in a fallen world. We constantly engage in a repentance-permeated life, recognizing our tendency to low-level thought and action as we lay before the church and before Christianity the highest goals possible. Though we may never achieve all that we desire, we pursue this path, because it is the path that leads to the fulfillment of the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven, as it is in the coming new creation (Hall 2010, 323).

The low-level thought and action is the kind of unthinking 'toaster' solutions to the problem of developing discipleship. If we have low-level thought, we will look at progress differently. We will try to achieve it in ways that may look good to us who have been brought up in a technological age, but in the end they will not give us the results that we seek. We do seek good results, and that is commendable. But we need to ask as we

make congregational or diocesan plans: is this the toaster method, or the cat method?

That image, of the cat and the toaster, is concrete enough that it is able to help us discern how we are developing the congregation. That is the reason that what I am proposing in the development of the Rule of Life as a resource for personal spiritual growth may not be able to utilize the usual instruments for measuring success. Success is a long process.

St. Chad's Church Plant

One helpful illustration to which I sometimes refer is our church plant. Our church plant is a pothos houseplant. It was presented to our congregation by a member with a renowned green thumb. Her plants are very healthy. When we had to leave our physical location in 2008, we left behind some plants. So everywhere we have gone to rent space since then, we have taken along the pothos. It takes a strong person, with a large car, to transfer it. Currently, we have no room for the plant in our Sunday worship location, so it is staying in the chapel of the seniors' residence where we have our 'church plant,' that is, the little congregation that meets weekly for Holy Communion, and is served by one of our Home Groups. The pothos house plant is a picture that reminds us how we take care of the plant, but God controls the growth. Sometimes, the gardener has to be severe with the plant, as our member once was, when the plant got 'leggy' and wild. She cut it back so much that I thought it would never survive. But it did. Every week she tends it before our service with the residents. The plant is a sign of God's faithfulness to us. But we are careful with it, and we treat it well, as the living thing that it is. We realize that God has put within it all the resources to be a beautiful plant, and even to give birth

to other house plants. In some locations it grows fast; in others, slowly. But as it is looked after, it maintains its greenness, and “yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither” (Psalms 1: 3 [ESV]). It takes patience for someone who cares for a plant to allow it develop the way it is intended to develop by its Creator.

Today’s Challenge

The positive features of the Rule of Life are clear. Its content is biblical, balanced and clear. It is short enough to remember. It covers every area of life. Its premise agrees with the Scriptures. It provides general principles that can be applied to an individual Anglican Christian, and also to an Anglican congregation. But are there any negative features? The biggest danger I see is to have it used by Anglican Christians who might see it as a list of rules which have to be followed in order to find ourselves approved by God. If that happened, the Rule would be replacing the Ruler in our lives, and that would be idolatry. This, of course, is a danger always in the Christian Church, and there is much written, in the Scriptures and in current Christian writers, about how we guard against this danger, which is not going to go away until Jesus returns.

In 2015, St. Chad’s has approximately twenty-four adult members and eight children and youth. We also have a number of people who attend occasionally or regularly who are not members. Since the church formed as part of the Network, some have joined, others have moved away. Six charter members remain with us. The main gathering of the congregation is every Sunday at 4:30 p.m. We have met at other times on Sundays, dependent on the place we were renting. The people come by car or public

transit, and one family is close enough to walk to the service. Some are driven by other members who transport them to and from the service. One comes by WheelTrans, which transports people with disabilities to their appointments if they order a ride. We are fortunate to have wheelchair access to the current building, which has made it possible to invite a broader range of people to the service. The youngest person regularly present is one year old (January 2016) and the oldest, ninety-three years old. Members are from Australia, England, Jamaica, the United States, Kenya, Nigeria, and Canada. Some are first generation immigrants, while others are second generation (I am first generation Scottish and English). Most people live within the boundary of Toronto proper, but some live in the Greater Toronto Area or beyond, because there are few Network churches in Ontario. Some people are married, some divorced, some single. Some are retired, others are on disability. Some own their own detached homes or townhomes, or condos; some rent in apartments and condos. Some have family living nearby, but many do not. Their level of education (adults) ranges from high school (incomplete or diploma); community college, university (graduate and post-graduate). They do, or have done, a variety of work, including government managers, doctors, elementary, high school, community college teachers, clergy, personal care workers and management, nursing, office work, students, architect. Some are involved in demanding shift work, and one juggles two jobs. When they gather for worship, some enjoy the traditional hymns, and others, contemporary music. There is great variety, as there is in their spiritual gifts, but they share a unity in Christ, and worship together.

When the parish was still in its building, before joining the Anglican Network, the members spent a year of various meetings to answer the question, “what is church” and

“what is this congregation to be and do.” Out of the study of the scriptures came a description of where the parish was, and where it might be headed. Its ministries were listed and evaluated and plans were discussed for the development of ministry, under four categories—worship, Christian education, evangelism, and mission. All of the answers to a series of questions put to everyone were collected, and out of that, a vision statement was composed by the congregation. It was: ‘Worshipping God, Trusting Christ, Obeying the Holy Spirit.’ In decisions made by the leaders for any type of ministry, this vision was uppermost in deciding how to proceed. All of the church’s ministries and interests fell under at least one of the vision phrases, which were composed to reflect the Trinitarian nature of our faith, and the ongoing life of the people under God’s guidance. It has served well, even though I have sometimes wondered if we might update the wording to express the unity of the Trinity better. The current membership of St. Chad’s come to an Anglican setting out of a number of backgrounds. Some are what can be called ‘cradle Anglicans,’ who may have begun their journey in other lands, or here in Canada. Some come from a Roman Catholic background, or Presbyterian Church of Canada, United Church of Canada, the Episcopal Church (USA), Baptist, Pentecostal, or even those influenced by or former members of, cults that formed out of a Christian background. These various backgrounds do affect the way the congregation sees itself, and points out the need for any development of discipleship to be Anglican Christian. If not, the Anglican identity of the parish would suffer. And this is also why I am hoping that the work I do may serve as a discussion in the broader Anglican Church, where similar parish backgrounds may be at work, diluting the Anglican heritage that is so valuable to preserve as one expression of the faith handed down from the apostles. Ongoing work

within the parish on this vision statement continues to be necessary, and ways to connect it with the development of the Rule of Life will have to be made. I see this being a natural fit, since the Rule of Life in the Canadian BCP assumes Anglican doctrine and life of the one living by this Rule. And since our vision statement had already addressed the need for us to be well-rounded in our Christian development, the Rule of Life seemed as if it would further focus our vision.

As St. Chad's goes forward, I see discipleship as crucial for the church to continue and grow, and so have been working at bringing that before the people in various forums, to identify how an Anglican church, in the Network (ANiC), can develop discipleship in this Anglican setting, using Anglican resources, in order to build a good foundation for its future primarily, but also secondarily, to benefit the broader Network.

As I develop this Rule of Life pattern for what St. Chad's offers for the spiritual growth of its members, I expect a number of outcomes.

I expect that the members of St. Chad's will gradually become familiar with the Rule of Life, that they will understand its implications for their own personal development as Jesus' disciples, and that they will be able to see how it informs our vision (so that what we do and who we are will be in agreement with the Rule of Life—we will make wise choices and decisions so that we won't be diverted from our vision).

I expect that as members get together in various settings, the Rule of Life will increasingly be in their memory, to remind them of our purpose as a parish.

I expect that the Rule of Life topics will be a good summary to guide the various ministries of the parish (for example, the sermons will periodically reflect on these six topics).

I expect that once a year the members will be encouraged to review their own personal Rule of Life, and be persuaded thereby to continue to grow in faith.

I expect that our annual meeting will also be a time when these topics will inform our reports, and keep us focused on what is important.

I expect that new people will be encouraged and challenged to see what being a member of St. Chad's involves.

I expect that there will be a short booklet written to let visitors know who we are, as disciples of Jesus, and that this information will also be clearly shown on our website.

These are all outcomes that I expect will develop. Of course, it will depend on how the Rule of Life is received, and how much it is able to be assimilated by members. It will not automatically happen by putting it all down on paper. It will require ongoing, methodical work, to help it become a habit amongst the congregation. Habits are interesting in general to think about. Habits are practices that people follow routinely. As a mother, it was important for me in our family to instill habits in the children. That did not happen by chance. It took work. It took training and repetition. It took personal example. People come into a parish with a great variety of habits, not all of which are good habits, or helpful for our identity as an evangelical Anglican parish. A parish is a living thing, created by God. We do not impose some mechanical structure or repair on such a body. So, what do I expect will happen as we go forward?

I think that the Rule of Life is so brief that the church members will be able to remember it, which is the first step in addressing it personally. This is a small thing, but important.

I think that the way the topics are stated will encourage individuals to see that there is a breadth to the discipleship to which Jesus is calling us. It will broaden their understanding.

I think that the various topics will challenge people in different ways, since assumptions of what it means to live the Christian life are likely already formed in many of those who have been church members for many years.

I think that we will face the danger that some people will see this Rule of Life as a legalistic way of life, and it will be a challenge to explain the gospel in a full way that recognizes what freedom in Christ is all about.

I think that we will face the danger of complacency in those who think they have ‘already arrived.’ This will be a challenge in continued teaching in the Word, and the conviction of the Holy Spirit to show us who we are.

I think we will face resistance from those who have developed a spirituality that is eclectic, which may not reflect the doctrine and teaching of the ANiC and the ACNA.

I think it is even possible that we may encounter apathy or opposition within our denomination and province, as further resources are developed which may state discipleship in a different way. For example, the affirmation of tithing is regularly stated in the broader Anglican setting. However, St. Chad’s affirms the discipline of generous giving, and does not believe that tithing is a New Testament teaching (Richardson, 2012). How we engage with such differences will reveal a lot about how we are Jesus’ disciples in modelling his humility.

I think that when the Rule of Life becomes a habitual, natural part of our church life, it will result in further development that will go more deeply into the various topics

that the Rule of Life touches upon. It will be simple enough for the youngest Christian, and challenging enough for the most mature Christian.

I think that as members adopt the Rule of Life intentionally we will see a development of various expressions of growth groups. A brief description of such groups would be informative. St. Chad's has often had small groups that meet outside of the Sunday worship time, but in the Sunday location. At one point we restructured our groups into Home Groups. Each group was a gathering of three or four people who came together to model the picture of the church that is illustrated in Acts 2. Each group had a well-rounded format when it met. It contained worship, hearing God's word, learning to understand God's word together, praying for one another and for the lost, by name, giving thanks to God, and having tea (usually the tea was done early, to allow people to gather and to hear about the past week). The final element of each group was outreach, a time when training, discussion or planning was done for a specific outreach venture, which could be a single event, an ongoing ministry, or sponsorship of an occasional outreach course. Through this structure we developed two such groups, the first which runs a weekly Holy Communion service for about twenty-five seniors in a residence, and the second which runs seasonally the Christianity Explored or the Discipleship Explored course in the church hall. A third group has just begun (February 2016), whose purpose is to have outreach to our community. I think that as members see the value of adopting the Rule of Life intentionally we will see a development in the number of Christianity Explored and other such courses being offered through our parish, in various settings. The six topics of the Rule of Life are all covered, to a greater or lesser degree, in the overall structure that the groups observe.

For the past two years (January and part of February) I have preached a sermon series using the six topics found in the Rule of Life, and have encouraged members to reflect on how their own spiritual life is doing. Even before that, I would choose perhaps one of the topics to focus on, over the course of a year. For example, the second topic is ‘the practice of private prayer, Bible-reading, and self-discipline.’ Although parishes in the Network were admonished one year to spend that year developing giving, attendance and spiritual maturity, the leaders decided that they would focus on prayer alone, as they sought to give leadership to the congregation which at that time was experiencing difficulty in the budget. Even though others beyond the parish urged that we set up a structured ‘plan,’ we said that we would just go with prayer, and see how God would work. By the end of that year, a large debt had been repaid and we had a surplus in the bank account. This greatly encouraged the parish to know that we can have faith in the way God leads us. Other aspects of the Rule of Life have also been affirmed, as we see people serving in the community, for example, or encourage members to share their testimony. Indeed, one member said that the whole idea of discipleship was a rather new topic, but one that the member was starting to incorporate into daily life.

The Rule of Life, as shared with the parish, is an ongoing venture. It is therefore open-ended in its use. It is the ‘cat’, not ‘toaster’ type of project. It is intended to be reviewed yearly, both individually and congregationally, and among leaders. It is in the mind of the clergy as they prepare their own ministry responsibilities, whether informal visits, outreach, or sermons, courses, and other elements of parish life.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

The activity of church planting today must rest upon solid biblical principles, if the growth is to be kingdom growth, and not merely marketing growth. An overview of the biblical principles upon which all aspects of church planting are based begins with the substantial foundation of the Old Testament, which informs all of the New Testament teaching about how the church expands throughout the world. It is in this context that I propose to set forth for the parish a plan for ‘Growing in Faith: The Rule of Life, a Basic, Balanced Resource for the Anglican Disciple of Jesus Christ.’ This is a personal plan for discipleship and I envision that this plan will affect all areas of congregational life. It will be important as a resource for incorporating new members, whether they are recent converts or not. It will be important in the planning of worship services, through bringing before people on a regular yearly basis the advisability of reviewing their own personal Rule of Life, and encouraging in them a renewed commitment to their life of discipleship. It will be helpful in the structuring of the Home Groups, the leaders’ meetings, and parish outreach ventures. It will be a way of letting people know who we are, since the Rule of Life principles will be included in our website. Often the parish website is the first place that people go to investigate us, before they actually visit for a Sunday service.

If you were to look at those churches and leaders involved in a vibrant church

ministry and ask about their motivation for church planting and training in discipleship, the response would likely include Matthew 28: 18-20, since in that passage, Jesus says, as you go along, make disciples, people who are learning about me in the same way that you are learning. And then Jesus tells them what that process looks like—baptizing people in the name of the Trinity, and subsequently teaching them to observe what he has taught them. This emphasis on the Great Commission is a good answer concerning one's motivation for church planting, which identifies the heart of the matter. Church planting and multiplication is the result of hearing and obeying the Gospel. The person who responds and acts upon it is building on a good foundation. There is a rapidly expanding interest in the topic of discipleship among evangelical North American churches today, of bringing people into a faith that transforms their beliefs and their way of life.

If you asked the average Anglican church member in Ontario about his/her motivation for church planting, you might get a perplexed response to the question from someone oblivious to the need for church planting and discipleship. Anglican churches in Ontario have generally stagnated over the past fifty years. Even fifty years ago, when there was some growth in the number of churches, it was not primarily real growth through converts, but through the transfer of church members to the suburbs or through an influx of immigrants. In recent years, since about 2008, there have been attempts at new forms of parish development in the Diocese of Toronto (ACoC) in their Missions department through a programme called Fresh Expressions, along with the distribution of grants to those parishes who qualify, to allow them to set up under the programme. The Missions department is currently headed by a priest who works in a west Toronto parish, a private girls' school, and also as honorary assistant at the diocesan cathedral, but is

available two days a week for consultation with parish teams on how to re-imagine church (there are 257 parishes in the diocese). There is one other resource person, also a priest, who is available one day a week for any who wish to explore church planting. As part of his work, he receives the surveys of those who wish to fill out an online form called “Are You a Church Planter?” This priest has stated on the website that they have learned the following about Missional Transformation:

- Missional transformation occurs when genuine innovation comes from among the people.
- The Spirit of God is among the people of God, so God’s future is among God’s people.
- Mission-shaped transformation can’t be led by pastors, clergy or those staff identified as the key leaders.
- Leaders still have a pivotal role to play but not through the usual, expected forms of leadership.
- To the extent that transformation is leader-driven, it will generate a lot of energy and hope in the short-term but fail over the long haul.
- A bottom-up, diffuse, non-linear process of transformation can create new missional DNA in church.
- We have found this comes best as we practice our way into new ways of thinking (Anglican Diocese of Toronto, n.d.).

Even with such development of information on its website over the past few years and the addition of several resource people, and even with some recent efforts in a ‘pioneer track’ Master of Divinity and a yearly conference on church planting, both sponsored by a local Anglican seminary (Wycliffe), there has been no perceptible church planting or growth in Toronto Diocese, even though it is the largest diocese in Canada spanning over twenty-six thousand kilometres (just over 10,000 square miles) in southern Ontario (Anglican Diocese of Toronto, n.d.).

Amongst the newly developing Anglican churches of Ontario associated with the Anglican Network in Canada, the Reformed Episcopal Church, and the Anglican Coalition in Canada (now called the Anglican Mission in Canada), there is a stated

affirmation of church planting, with its attendant training in discipleship. But, while people are moving from one parish to another (that is, out of the Anglican Church of Canada), it would be hard to cite much evidence of true church plants composed of converts to the faith, in the province of Ontario. In fact, some that sprang up have now closed or on the point of closing. Perhaps this is due to the newness of these expressions of Anglicanism in Ontario. Organizations in their infancy undergo a lot of trials, twists and turns, before they learn how to take root. Currently (2016) the Anglican Mission in Canada (formerly, Anglican Coalition in Canada) website (www.theamcanada.ca) currently lists twelve churches. In Ontario, there is one Chinese-speaking church in Toronto and one English church plant in Ottawa. The Anglican Network in Canada lists its parishes and church plants together and does not identify which are new church plants. If you look on the Anglican Network in Canada website you will see that the most recent statistics are from August 2015, showing seventy congregations/plants, five of which are located in the USA. Many of the Canadian churches were once part of the Anglican Church of Canada. The website for the Reformed Episcopal Church (ACNA) shows three churches in Canada and no church plants. Not all new church plants or transplants survive. Structures in the new Anglican entities to support new churches have not had time to develop, and resources have not yet been assembled. One example shows the fragility of such growth even amongst Anglican Church in North America affiliated parishes. In the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), Living Hope Anglican Church is a church that formed in 2011 when an Anglican priest and some members of his Anglican Church of Canada parish left to join the Anglican Network in Canada. They began with about fifty people, and first found a rental space in a church, then in a school, and now, just four

years later, in the living room of a condo. Most of its members have moved on to other churches, and its first rector has retired. In 2014 it reported 10 ASA, and in summer 2015 the church had about five people. Current statistics (2016) are available through the Rev. Andrew Gross, ACNA, and the Rev. Tom Carman, ANiC registrar.

There is evidence in Ontario in Anglican churches of various theological persuasions that the mechanics of church planting are at least being discussed. However, there is not much evidence of a developed biblical and theological motivation for such activity. Much more likely, one finds the motivation for such discussion being the ever-lurking fear concerning declining church numbers. That problem is then put in the context of exploring marketing strategies to fill pews and coffers, whether developed ‘in house’ or exported from other organizations, some of which may be secular marketing firms, while others are church planting businesses.

After looking at statistics for Anglican Church plants in Ontario, it appears to me that most of the groups identified as church plants are really church transplants. At this stage it is difficult to obtain comparative attendance figures to see if there has been real numerical growth.

Given the promotion, choice, and use of pragmatic methods, with little observed regard for a biblical and theological basis for those methods, to draw people into the church, there is a need in the local setting to have a good grounding in the biblical and theological foundation for church planting and multiplication, and to be able to communicate it. I conclude this after having read how church planting is often described in websites and the literature. Often the greatest space and specificity is given not to the biblical and theological foundations but to the nuts and bolts of planning a start-up and

much of this is based on secular marketing. It is because of this that I would like St. Chad's to look at the spiritual growth of its members as it is facilitated by a personal Rule of Life. A good biblical and theological foundation in discipleship is essential if church planting is to occur in the Network as a biblical faithful Anglican expression of the Church.

The motivation for such church planting/multiplication, with its ordered teaching of daily discipleship, originates in the love of God, who communicated his message to sinful humanity, first through the prophets, and now by his Son.

God Sends

The love of God for his creation, first in creating people to be in communion with him, and then, after the Fall, in providing a way for them to be reconciled to him, indicates that when we are remade in Christ, we become part of the new creation, part of his kingdom, and we exhibit his reconciling love to those who have not as yet received his love. We follow, because he has made us for relationship, with himself and with others. He wants to walk with us.

In the beginning, God created humanity, and it was very good. The plan of God was that people populate the world that he had made for them, and that they enjoy friendship with him. Genesis 1 describes God's pleasure in them, and his plan for their development.

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.

And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Genesis 1: 26-28 [ESV]).

God conversed with Adam and Eve in the garden. They walked with him, and he with them. There was no barrier between them. Even then his plan was for the earth to be filled with people who belonged to him. God’s plan after the Fall, was for the Good News of freedom from sin to be known. Genesis 3:15 is called the ‘Proto-evangelium’, the first statement of the Gospel. It occurs after both the man and the woman have sinned against God, having been tempted by the serpent. God declares to the serpent, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” (Genesis 3: 15 [ESV]) God would one day destroy evil.

Genesis 3: 15 is traditionally understood as a prophecy about Jesus, who would suffer because of the attack of Satan, but, through his crucifixion, would destroy Satan decisively. God made garments for them from the skins of animals, and clothed Adam and Eve. (Genesis 3: 21[ESV]) Traditionally this has been seen as the first sign of God’s intention to provide the sacrifice of blood to grant forgiveness to sinners. There can be no discussion of the biblical and theological motivation for church planting that leaves out teaching about the sinfulness of humanity and the provision of forgiveness through Jesus’

sacrifice. It is sad to hear the words in Genesis 3: 8, which says that “They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden (Genesis 3: 8 [ESV]). The fellowship was broken. No longer were they content to follow their Creator. They would not walk with God.

Yet God’s covenant promises reveal the scope of his love for sinners. Just as in Genesis 3 God initially blesses the man and the woman, all throughout the Old Testament God repeats that promise of blessing.

God’s initial command to multiply was then twisted into its negative form during the growth of human population in Noah’s time. People multiplied, but because of sin, they also multiplied sin. God’s judgement fell upon all people except Noah and his family (Genesis 6), who found favour with God. Noah did all that God commanded him and was rescued from the great flood. We read in Genesis 6 that Noah pleased God: “Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation; Noah walked with God (Genesis 6: 9 [ESV]).

God renewed the command to be fruitful and multiply, and Noah sacrificed selected birds and animals from the ark.

Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And when the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma, the Lord said in his heart, “I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease” (Genesis 8: 20-22 [ESV]).

Genesis chapter 9 is the record of that covenant:

And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man.

“Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.

And you, be fruitful and multiply, teem on the earth and multiply in it.”

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, “Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.” And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth” (Genesis 9: 1-17 [ESV]).

Notice that the command is to be fruitful and multiply and that God blesses Noah and his family. The promise is for all that live on the earth, that he will never again bring a flood to destroy all people. God is preparing the way for people once again to walk with him.

Later, Abraham also received God’s promise, in Genesis 12:

Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will

curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Genesis 12: 1-3 [ESV]).

God’s intention to bless all people was that it would be done through the family line of faithful Abraham, who is sent out from his own land, given confirmation (Genesis 15) that his offspring would possess the land, and then (Genesis 17) given the sign of circumcision as a visible confirmation of that covenant, saying to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless” (Genesis 17: 1 [ESV]). Again, in Genesis 22, God confirms the covenant, when he provided a ram for the sacrifice of burnt offering that he had commanded, and Isaac is saved.

The promise was repeated to Isaac after Abraham had died, and again includes the vision of a movement of God’s blessing which will reach the entire world:

Now there was a famine in the land, besides the former famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Gerar to Abimelech king of the Philistines. And the Lord appeared to him and said, “Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you. Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father. I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws” (Genesis 26: 1-5 [ESV]).

After Isaac, Jacob in his time saw the covenant renewed by God. Not only would one nation come from him, but many nations.

God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Paddan-aram, and blessed him. And God said to him, “Your name is Jacob; no longer shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name.” So he called his name Israel. And God said to him, “I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of

nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body. The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you” (Genesis 35: 9-12 [ESV]).

In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses teaches the people what God wants, and often speaks about how the people are to fear the Lord and walk in all his ways, ways in which God had given command to them to walk (Deuteronomy 8: 6; 10: 12; 11: 22; 13: 5; 19: 9; 26: 17; 28: 9; 30: 16 [ESV]). God’s intention is that his people walk with him, just as was his original plan in the Garden of Eden.

God’s covenant is reiterated for David (2 Samuel 7), as the prophet Nathan speaks the message God has given him, to bless David’s descendants forever. Here the covenant is the promise of both a kingdom, and a son, whose kingdom would be everlasting. The New Testament sees in this covenant the promise about Jesus, who is the King of kings. Through Jesus will come the new covenant, about which Jeremiah (about 400 years after King David) had prophesied, and which is brought about through the blood of Jesus, the sacrificial Lamb of God.

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more (Jeremiah 31: 31-34 [ESV]).

Jesus dies for the sins of the whole world, and so in his death, all the covenant promises are fulfilled for all the nations.

Throughout the Old Testament we see evidence that God's people fell away from his good plan. They were to walk in all the ways of the Lord, but during the times of the judges, the kings and the prophets, they repeatedly walked away from him. They desired and walked after other gods. They bowed down to them. They ignored the steadfast love which God wanted to pour upon his people, and walked in the way of sin and idolatry (for example, see Judges 2: 17; 1 Kings 16: 26).

A study of the sacrificial system in the Old Testament (for example, in Leviticus) is helpful for the church today, many of whom have Gentile roots, to understand more fully the biblical and theological impetus for church planting and its vision of redeemed sinners walking humbly with their God, follow Jesus on The Way. Such background is unfortunately neglected in churches today. It is not possible to include even an overview here of how central this understanding was for the first Jewish Christians as they shared the Good News. But without it, evangelism loses its urgency, and is in danger of being rootless. It is because of the efficacy of Jesus' sacrifice, which was ordained before the creation of the world, illustrated in the Old Testament sacrifices, and then fulfilled in Jesus' sacrificial death, that we have Good News. It is because of this that we can have the privilege of walking with the Lord and growing in our faith. The apostle Peter, writing to Jewish Christian exiles about how they were to conduct themselves, understood the importance of remembering, "knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you" (1 Peter 1: 18-20 [ESV]).

Even today, how is it possible for the Christian Church to walk away from God and have no reverent fear of him? The question from the book of Nehemiah could be asked in our day: “Ought you not to walk in the fear of our God, to prevent the taunts of the nations our enemies?” (Nehemiah 5: 9 [ESV]).

God has much better things in mind. He initiates the message of salvation, first through the prophets, and lastly, through his Son. Those who speak the message are called and sent out by God. The writer to the Hebrews shows that the message was first spoken by the prophets, but now by Jesus, the holy one who makes people holy (Hebrews 1: 1-4). Jesus commissions his disciples, saying, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you” (John 20: 21 [ESV]).

The initiative is all from God, who wants his Word to be heard, and wants people who will walk with him. Just as he called the prophets of the Old Testament to speak the word that he would give to them, to call people back to his path, so Jesus proclaimed that with him the Kingdom of God had come near. And many heard and followed on The Way. The call and commissioning of the disciples by Jesus is the culmination of the great plan that God had initiated from the beginning, yet this call is where we often begin. However, it is more fully understood only with a solid background of Old Testament teaching.

It is God who sends, and as we come to the ministry of Jesus, we read how he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves” (Luke 10: 2-3 [ESV]).

The God who sends, has sent his Son into the world, and now he sends his followers out to work in the harvest. We might expect that the God who calls people to himself will reveal himself fully through the ministry of his Son, and this is what happens. While the foundation for church planting can be found in the Old Testament, it is fully explained only as we see Jesus' earthly life, and hear his call to follow him in a life of discipleship.

Jesus Teaches

Jesus tells his followers why he has called them. Just as the Father sent his Son into the world, Jesus now sends his followers into the world. Jesus came into the world to save sinners; his followers go into the world to share Jesus' work, a call to repentance and faith, so that others may believe in him as Saviour.

The Great Commission of Jesus (Matthew 28: 18-20) presents a good summary of the process of church planting (the growth and multiplication of those who are called out by God to be his people and to walk with him.). It is a command to be obeyed, and comes with the promise that Jesus himself will go with his disciples in all of his divine authority. Jesus shows throughout his earthly ministry as he trains his followers for ministry just how this is accomplished. Church planting is therefore the unique work of those who are already Jesus' disciples, with all of the implications which that discipleship brings. It is the relationship of the disciples to Jesus their Lord that determines how their church planting endeavours succeed. Contemporary resources for how to plant a church may be

helpful, but if they become a substitute for a deep and vital relationship of church planters with Jesus their Lord, they will not accomplish what is intended—an expanding, flourishing, vibrant body of believers. They may produce results, in the form of numbers and activities and financial resources, but they will not produce mature Christian growth. A well known example of the danger of relying on such resources is found in the Willow Creek experience. They had to admit, “we made a mistake.”

Not long ago Willow released its findings from a multiple year qualitative study of its ministry. Basically, they wanted to know what programs and activities of the church were actually helping people mature spiritually and which were not. The results were published in a book, *Reveal: Where Are You?*, co-authored by Greg Hawkins, executive pastor of Willow Creek. Hybels called the findings “earth shaking,” “ground breaking,” and “mind blowing.”

...In a video by Greg Hawkins about their discovery he says, “Participation is a big deal. We believe the more people participating in these sets of activities, with higher levels of frequency, it will produce disciples of Christ.” This has been Willow's philosophy of ministry in a nutshell. The church creates programs/activities. People participate in these activities. The outcome is spiritual maturity. In a moment of stinging honesty Hawkins says, “I know it might sound crazy but that's how we do it in churches. We measure levels of participation.”

Having put so many of their eggs into the program-driven church basket, you can understand their shock when the research revealed that “Increasing levels of participation in these sets of activities does NOT predict whether someone's becoming more of a disciple of Christ. It does NOT predict whether they love God more or they love people more.”

Speaking at the Leadership Summit, Hybels summarized the findings this way:

Some of the stuff that we have put millions of dollars into thinking it would really help our people grow and develop spiritually, when the data actually came back, it wasn't helping people that much. Other things that we didn't put that much money into and didn't put much staff against is stuff our people are crying out for.

Having spent thirty years creating and promoting a multi-million dollar organization driven by programs and measuring participation, and convincing

other church leaders to do the same, you can see why Hybels called this research "the wake-up call" of his adult life.

Hybels confesses:

We made a mistake. What we should have done when people crossed the line of faith and become Christians, we should have started telling people and teaching people that they have to take responsibility to become 'self feeders.' We should have gotten people, taught people, how to read their bible between service, how to do the spiritual practices much more aggressively on their own.

In other words, spiritual growth doesn't happen best by becoming dependent on elaborate church programs but through the age old spiritual practices of prayer, bible reading, and relationships. And, ironically, these basic disciplines do not require multi-million dollar facilities and hundreds of staff to manage (Christianity Today, 2007).

But neither can these disciplines be an add-on to faith, whereby a Christian can choose at some point (or not) to 'go deeper' in faith, or stay at some lower level. This mindset is still cafeteria Christianity, which does not result in a church in which committed members are growing in faith. If discipleship is not stated as an expected outflow of coming to faith, the church will again fail to be all that God wants it to be.

The Great Commission, as it is often called, guards against a superficial, market-driven approach to church planting, when we grapple with what Jesus is saying in it. Notice how Jesus commands his followers with these words, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28: 18-20 [ESV]).

First of all, he came to his followers. How disciples follow the one who speaks to them is a necessary part of looking at the principles of church planting, and how disciples

are made. Secondly, he sends his followers out with the knowledge that he has all authority in heaven and on earth. The one who commands is the one who sends and equips. This is how the disciple who is sent may go confidently, knowing that it does not depend on him, but on the one who sends. Thirdly, the mandate is all-encompassing. It happens as his followers go along. What this means is that as his followers live each day, wherever they go, whatever they do, they are to be carrying out what Jesus wants them to do. In many church planting books the topic of incarnational ministry is described. This is simply the disciple of Jesus going about his daily life doing what Jesus commands, walking with God through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' commands are not to a particular place, but to a particular way of life that will result in others knowing about him, and becoming his disciples.

Jesus spoke the Great Commission to the disciples after his resurrection. However, previously, during his earthly ministry, he had already sent out the Twelve with specific instructions about what they should say and do:

Then Jesus called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. He said to them, "Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money—not even an extra tunic. Whatever house you enter, stay there, and leave from there. Wherever they do not welcome you, as you are leaving that town shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them." They departed and went through the villages, bringing the good news and curing diseases everywhere (Luke 9: 1-6 [NRSV]).

A reading of Luke 10 shows that Jesus also wanted a broader group of his disciples to do what he has been doing. More people than the Twelve had observed his ministry for over a year, and now he was sending seventy of them out with the same ministry which he had

given to the Twelve. Jesus' emphasis was on their making disciples and staying as long as their teaching was welcomed. It was intensive work. They were entering in to the daily lives of those who would accept them.

... the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!' And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.' I tell you, on that day it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that town (Luke 10: 1-12 [NRSV]).

The seventy returned with joy. Jesus had prepared them well for the ups and downs of doing his work, and they too, just like the Twelve, saw great things happen as a result of their ministry, along with persecution and rejection.

So what we see in Matthew 28 is a summary of this work, for which Jesus had already been training his followers before his death and resurrection. They had already been going out among their nearer and further neighbours to heal and to teach, as they themselves had learned from Jesus. What Jesus is saying in Matthew 28 is that nothing has changed. They are still his disciples, and he is still with them. They are still his disciples, and they are to continue to do what he had taught them to do in the years before his crucifixion. They would do it with more understanding, of course, and with a settled, ongoing authority and power, as they received the promise of the Holy Spirit.

The Apostolic Vision Informs

As the disciples continued to do what Jesus had taught them to do, the history of the early church provides ample resources for some solid biblical church planting principles, and a model for how every Christian may grow spiritually and live as Jesus' disciple. The book of Acts shows how the Holy Spirit guides the believers, and this guidance results in the expansion of the Church. It is this ongoing work of Jesus, begun with the first disciples through the power of the Spirit, and continuing by the same Spirit with those who become disciples through their obedience to Jesus' mandate, that helps us see how God plans for his church to grow in a variety of situations and a variety of cultures.

On the day of Pentecost Peter preached and three thousand people responded in repentance and faith. As a result, "those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls" (Acts 2: 41 [ESV]). This is the first example of what would happen as the disciples obeyed the Great Commission. The new believers were brought into the original company of one hundred and twenty followers of Jesus who had assembled before Pentecost in the upper room. The evidence of these new believers joining was seen in the following verses that form a snapshot of what it looked like as they came together.

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes,

they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved (Acts 2: 42-47 [ESV]).

The early work of proclaiming the Gospel had been done by Peter and the other apostles. Those who received their message were baptized and then they began to learn Jesus' teaching. Learning the teaching was what all disciples did. The word 'disciple,' from 'mathetes,' meant in those days someone who is learning comprehensively in an environment where he or she can experience what is being taught, on a continuing basis. He or she is the pupil of a teacher, who enters into a relationship where doctrine is learned and faith is developed. What the early Christians learned changed their lives. And just as the apostle Paul would later say, Jesus' followers planted and watered, but it was God who gave the increase. God took the new believers and placed them into the assembly, where they continued to meet together. They did so in the common ways that were available to them. They met in the temple courts, the place which was the centre of public religion. Some had already formed this habit before their conversion to the Christian faith. They met in their homes, a practice that naturally followed from the way that Jesus had instructed his disciples to stay in the homes of those who accepted their message, and from how Jesus himself often did his fuller teaching of his own disciples in a home setting. They loved one another in practical ways, providing for those in need. They persevered. They knew that to be a follower meant to be committed to a way of life which was shared with all other believers. They learned these new habits. This particular process is important to emphasize today, especially when we see those who profess faith in Jesus and yet live their lives separated from other believers. It is not possible biblically to separate one's belief from one's behavior. Their faith was lived out in daily life, and it

was done together. There was no thought that a person could become a Christian and not become part of a group of believers that gathered together regularly for the kind of activity that we see described in Acts 2: 42 to 47. There are Christian people in the urban area of Toronto who are transient and others who have been injured in their past church experiences. They try to live the Christian life by themselves, their only link being a few specially chosen friends or a diet of religious television programmes. And it cannot be done. It results in an unbalanced kind of Christian growth, or even stagnation. There are no healthy, solitary Christians in the New Testament, and there are not any such today.

Often the word 'follow', in the Greek, 'akoloutheo,' is used in the Gospels to describe the way disciples follow, or go the way of, Jesus. They travel along with him. He is part of their day's work. This description of discipleship shows how vital it is that any learning about the faith be done in real life, every day, and not just in a classroom setting where students are taught facts and are said to have achieved learning by being able to feed back the knowledge they have memorized. The discipleship shown in the New Testament is an active, daily following of Jesus, and learning from him. In our day, the word 'disciple' is being used more than it used to be. A wonderful little book by John Stott called 'The Radical Disciple' points out the need for Christians to see their lives as disciples of Jesus. It is not enough to say we are Christians because that word has been deprived of so much of its meaning. But the word 'disciple' gets us to the root (the 'radix') of what it means to be a Christian, a follower of Jesus. It points us to our purpose, which is to be like Jesus. Our spiritual growth occurs as we hear the call to discipleship and grow up spiritually. And it is here that the Rule of Life in the Canadian Book of Common Prayer helps us to have a balanced understanding of what that

involves. It is an all-encompassing pattern by which we can measure Christian growth in our faith.

A large part of the New Testament is composed of letters that various Christian leaders sent to the churches. These expand our understanding of the biblical principles for church planting and discipleship beyond the Gospels, and in a way that harmonizes with the teaching of the Gospels. The Apostle Paul writes to the Romans that the Gospel must go out beyond the Jewish people to the ends of the earth, and he bases this on verses from the Old Testament (see Romans 10). He says, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Romans 10: 13 [ESV]), and that is a quote from Joel 2: 32, which says, ‘And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the LORD has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the LORD calls’ (Joel 2: 32 [ESV]).

Paul says that this can happen only as people hear about the Lord, and that happens through preaching. He quotes Psalm 19 to show that the message is for all the world, and has been shown in the greatness of God’s creation: “Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world” (Psalms 19: 4 [NRSV]). He then quotes more prophets to show that his love and mercy extend beyond Israel, and will be accepted by the Gentiles in a way that the people of Israel did not.

But I ask, did Israel not understand? First Moses says,

“I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation;
with a foolish nation I will make you angry.”

Then Isaiah is so bold as to say,

“I have been found by those who did not seek me;
I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me.”

But of Israel he says, “All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people” (Romans 10: 19-21 [ESV]).

While Jesus sent Paul specially to preach to the Gentiles, Paul knew that God’s intention all along, from the beginning, had been for all people to hear and believe and enter the Kingdom, and this is seen in his letters in a number of places. In his letter to the Romans, he says that he is “a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures” (Romans 1: 1-2 [ESV]). He went on to argue in that letter that the gospel was for everyone, and that everyone needed to believe it. As a result, there was nowhere that Paul would exempt from missionary expansion and the call to become a disciple of Jesus.

Just as Jesus had disciples who were involved in the work with him, so also Paul was not a lone missionary, but someone who worked alongside many others. Paul in his concluding remarks (Romans 16) mentions a number of people who either worked alongside him or who worked in one of the house churches in Rome, and whom Paul called hard workers: Phoebe, Prisca, Aquila, Epaenetus, Mary, Andronicus, Junia, Ampliatus, Urbanus, Stachys, Apelles, Aristobulus, Herodion, Narcissus, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Persus, Rufus, Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, Philologus, Julia, Nereus, and Olympas, as well as relatives and friends of these people. Further study in his other letters supports this principle of collegiality, not autocracy, in the planting and building up of churches. The work needed the spiritual gifts of many, if disciples

were to be built up in the faith, equipped for service, and become mature in Christ. It requires all to work together.

The Holy Spirit Enables

No study of the biblical foundation for church planting and its attendant components can forget the role of the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus sent to be with his followers when he ascended to heaven. First of all, not only do the scriptures as a whole show that the initiative in calling people to salvation rests with God, but that he sent Jesus who himself says, upon hearing Peter's confession that he is the Messiah, that he will build his church. (Matthew 16: 15-18). The church is built around a confession of faith in Jesus, a revelation that must be given to a person by God.

Who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it (Matthew 16: 15b-20 [NRSV]).

The church grows through God's initiative. When Jesus ascends into heaven he, in turn, sends the Holy Spirit to continue his work on earth. In Ephesians 3, Paul shows how he is called to proclaim the Gospel to the Gentiles, and how God has also given this work to the church:

Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things;

so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places (Ephesians 3: 8-10 [NRSV]).

If we were to look at the Apostle Paul's teaching, we would see a well-balanced instruction in how the Christian is to live. Without actually saying that it is a Rule of Life, the Apostle Paul affirms the essential actions that are evident in a disciple, such as worship, learning and meditating on the scriptures, praying, being ready to confess his faith and to share it with those who need to hear, being active in the congregation and the community through works of loving service, and displaying a healthy, generous stewardship of everything he is and has for the sake of the Gospel. This work of making God's all-encompassing truth known in the world is accomplished as the church is strengthened through the power of the Spirit. Discipleship cannot occur without the Holy Spirit. While in the present, Paul and the church may experience suffering, in the future they will see the glory of God being displayed amazingly in the church. When we study the various passages that describe the gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, Ephesians 4), and when we see how they are unfolded in New Testament church life, it is evident that the Gospel is spread and churches planted because of the work of the Holy Spirit and through the body of gathered believers. The growth of the body comes out of the practicing of these gifts for the sake of one another. As this is seen in the world, the world will recognize that Christians are modelling a different kind of life, and it will be a witness of God's work in their lives. The Apostle gives the appropriate response to this glorious picture of the church: "Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to

him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen” (Ephesians 3: 20, 21 [NRSV]). It is all for Jesus.

The scriptures reveal the universal reach of God’s plan for his creation throughout their pages, and this is documented in Luke’s second book. The book of Acts describes the various ways that the Gospel was proclaimed in ever-widening circles starting at Jerusalem. The intention of God for the church is to have it grow as a company of disciples, where each person is following Jesus, and there is no two-tiered membership. The Christian life is for all who have come to faith; discipleship is for the youngest to the oldest convert. As we study this growth, we see the beginning of the Christian church worldwide, as disciples were made and then began to go into the entire world and preach the gospel. The key verse that the Gospel writer Luke gives to show how the church expands is Acts 1: 8, where Jesus says, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1: 8 [ESV]).

Not only does the Book of Acts show the outward movement of the Gospel, and the growing number of churches being planted, but it links this process firmly to the power of the Holy Spirit being received by Jesus’ followers, as the means by which they were able to do church planting, making disciples of all nations, baptizing them and then teaching them to observe all that Jesus had taught. They went out because Jesus had told them to do it, and it is interesting that they did it because they themselves were caught up in the divine mandate, and carried it out by how they lived. It came out of their living relationship with God. It was not their own ability or expertise that guaranteed success, but the Holy Spirit’s working through them. They walked with God. It is like a plant that

is in the proper environment, tended by an owner who knows exactly how to take care of the plant. It grows at the appropriate rate that it is intended to grow. The initiator of church planting and the development of new churches is God the Father, who loves the world, God the Son who saves people, and God the Holy Spirit who guides disciples to do the work and who brings people to the light. As a result of God's initiative in their lives, the disciples in the book of Acts went out evangelizing and planting churches no matter what their outer circumstances. Some of those circumstances were quite difficult. They did not wait for a plan to be worked out by the headquarters at Jerusalem, to give them permission to go here or there, to say this or that, to do this or that. They just did what they had heard Jesus tell them to do, and what the Holy Spirit equipped them to do. They had received the teaching well; they were united in purpose with the church in Jerusalem. They did their evangelizing and discipling on business trips. They did it as immigrants. They just did it as they went along. Every day of our lives has its process of 'going'—going to shop, going to school, going to visit friends, going to worship, going on holiday. Whatever their situation, they went about as Jesus' followers. And part of being clear and wise about church planting today may involve forgetting how churches have promoted growth in the past century, and reclaiming the biblical foundation for church planting, and then going about in today's context. This effort should begin in the local church, as people are converted and become disciples of Jesus, and this effort should then be affirmed and encouraged by the denomination. Nicky Gumbel says in his Alpha talk about 'making the most of the rest of our lives,' that once we have received the fullness of the Spirit, we have to be willing to give up the garbage. For some, the garbage is not only the sins that pull us away from following Jesus closely on the way,

but also the reliance on methods of church expansion that have been promoted in the past. Sometimes these methods are good, but sometimes they are methods that have been accepted without asking God whether they conform to his will. Sometimes, they are no more than worldly tools and measurements of success employed without any solid biblical or theological foundation. Denominational programmes can and should be analyzed by looking at how much space they devote to the biblical and theological foundation for the plan or programme being promoted, and in how much specific detail it is presented. A comparison of both the rationale and the actual written programme may show that the foundation is given only introductory space, which has only general content, while the programme being promoted is written in very specific terms. This is a good clue that the work of forming the theological and biblical foundations of any such plan or programme has not been done thoroughly. Fortunately, in a good deal of current church planting research and education, the tide is turning. Enough has happened in North American, especially American, church life so that we can now see more clearly the danger of letting the world squeeze us into its mould, and therefore we are beginning to understand the need to re-evaluate how we have done evangelism and how we have thought about church growth.

Conclusion

As we look at how the scriptures unfold the plan of God, it becomes clear that God is always speaking to his creation, in his Word, and inviting them to receive his love.

He calls, from Genesis to Revelation. The Kingdom of God is at hand. Now is the day of salvation. Jesus continues to call people to receive forgiveness and to live under his sovereign rule, to be baptized and become disciples, and enjoy the blessings of his kingdom, to walk with him on an exciting journey. Why should this result in the planting of churches and the intentional discipling of those who are converted? It should have this result because it is in the gathering together of believers into local expressions of the church and in their corporate study of what it means to follow Jesus, that the best and true expression of Jesus' continuing call to people is made. The church is at the centre of what God is doing in the world. Nothing describes the church better than the description of the church, to which I have already referred:

So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved (Acts 2: 42-47 [NRSV]).

This summary passage tells us what happened when people were converted on the Day of Pentecost. The verses are written down by Luke, guided by the Holy Spirit, not as a blueprint for how to organize a church, but to show what happens whenever people repent of their sins, are received into the church through baptism, and then grow as disciples. It is what happens when God works in the hearts of people who have faith in Jesus. They develop as they should, with balanced spiritual disciplines. It is well-

balanced, and demonstrates the ordered creativity of God, who puts into one body many different kinds of people with a multitude of spiritual gifts. In this summary statement there is evidence of God's power at work. The believers share a common purpose and experience. They love one another in very practical ways. They gather together regularly, formally and informally, for worship and edification. They are united. They are an attractive lot.

The current scarcity in real life of such a picture of what the church is to be, has caused some to establish other organizations to work alongside the church. People have formed a vision, and found that there seems to be no room for it to develop within the church. And so, they have set up separate groups to carry out their vision. This is unfortunate, since it weakens local churches. And these parachurch organizations cannot be the church, because they are concerned with just part of a church's life. But thankfully, the lack of an Acts 2 vision in the church has served to motivate other church leaders to find out how to renew the church so that it does look like the description in Acts 2. There are no shortcuts to analyzing why the state of the church in Toronto, or indeed, in North America, seems so spiritually impoverished. Superficiality and easy answers will not help. Panicked scrambling to try to turn things around quickly will not help. Ill-conceived church growth plans will not help. Step-by-step instructions about how to plant churches indiscriminately in urban and rural areas, areas of economic poverty and wealth, areas with disparate cultures and philosophies, will not work. They will result in some new churches in Canada, because just as in the 1950's and 1960's in Canada, church members do move around, and where they settle become easy places to set up churches. But without a firm grounding in the biblical and theological foundation for church planting,

the little seed, the new plant, may sprout for a while, and perhaps grow, and maybe even endure for a while. But it will not be caught up in the great creative act of God, the great plan of the triune God for the Church to go out in ever widening circles, and touch people where they are, and bring new growth.

The biblical and theological foundation for church planting ends where it both began and then was subsequently unfolded throughout the scriptures, with the call of God through Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to individuals who respond to that call, and are converted, not to man-made comfortable groups of Christians who are content to meet together and feel good about themselves, and restrict their expression of love to one another, but to a communion of saints who have been added to Jesus' church and who follow him and do his work as they go along, day by day, in families, jobs, and society. Discipleship is not some extra activity imposed upon Christ's followers, to be added to the time they spend on their family, work and social schedules. Discipleship is how Jesus' followers live, how they go about their daily activity. Discipleship flourishes when the teaching of the scriptures is the authority for how we live. This is well stated when Paul encouraged the young leader Timothy to teach the faith correctly, and not as the false teachers did.

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3: 14-17 [ESV]).

In a letter to the Corinthian church, the Apostle Paul speaks of his evangelistic work among them in this way: “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor” (1 Corinthians 3: 6-8 [ESV]). The seed is God’s message, which Paul had proclaimed to them initially. Apollos also ministered among them, developing what Paul had begun. But the growth comes through God’s activity in their lives.

Jesus spoke of the various kinds of receptivity towards God’s Word in Matthew 13, the Parable of the Sower. Growth varies. It is beyond our control. God gives the increase, and when he makes things grow, they yield an abundant crop. In the natural world, all of the crop levels that Jesus mentions in Matthew 13 would be unusually high. Farmers could not expect such growth. But in God’s planting activity, abundant growth occurs, because God, the creator and sustainer, makes it grow as he decides.

CHAPTER THREE

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

In the history of the Christian Church, one can trace the development of discipleship and a variety of expressions of the Rule of Life to New Testament times. It is not possible here to mention them all, but they lend historical credibility to the current growing interest in presenting Christians with the discipleship resources needed to be faithful, maturing members of churches. The first description of an ordered way of life for the Christian disciple is found in Acts. It is a summary snapshot of what the Church looked like in its beginning days.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved (Acts 2: 42-47 [NRSV]).

The Vintage Spiritual Classics series includes a book called "The Rule of Saint Benedict," which is a recent (1998) edition of an earlier publication (1981). It provides an introductory chapter on the Chronology of Christian Monasticism (160 BC to 600 AD) (The Rule of Saint Benedict 1998, xxxi-xxxvi). Monastics from this time period established rules to help them in their quest to live disciplined Christian lives in a society

that had grown increasingly worldly. So we see that this practice of retreating from society in order to find the perfect environment in which to live the Christian life began very early in Christian history. They responded to the difficulty that they experienced in living as a Christian in society, by retreating from society to live in deserted locations alone or with others who joined their order.

Jesus himself had set the example, so they believed, for this way of life, when he went into the desert for forty days, fasting and praying and then being tempted by the Devil. His time in the desert echoed the forty years that the people of Israel had wandered in desert, but whereas they repeatedly sinned against the Lord, Jesus faced temptation and conquered it through the Word of God. They wanted to follow his example.

A little later in the history of the Christian Church, after Christianity had achieved recognition by government and persecution had ceased, others began to go out from their communities and settle in barren areas to devote themselves to prayer and fasting and a simple way of life. They also were motivated to do this because of the sinfulness that they saw around them. They were concerned about how the church was influenced by the society around it. They wanted to get away from all of that and spend their time in communion with God. So they withdrew from society. While some have criticized this withdrawal as an abandonment of the Christian's duty to be a witness to Jesus in the world, others have taken a more positive view of their decision, saying that in the long run, the Christian faith has been helped by their withdrawal, since it allowed strong communities to be formed and educational centres eventually to be built, which would preserve the Christian faith.

At the beginning of the fourth century, Pachomius of Egypt converted to the Christian faith and was influenced by some hermits (hermits were Christians who left their communities to live a solitary life devoted to God). He later established a monastery where monks lived together under what is now called the Rule of St. Pachomius. This Rule consisted solely of a simple and easy to memorize practice of prayer to be prayed together daily. Those who entered his monastery shared their belongings and lived together, spending much time in prayer, and doing the regular work needed to sustain their community.

Others came after Pachomius and modelled their communities on his pattern. Included among these were St. Basil the Great, in Asia Minor, St. Gregory of Nazianzen and St. Gregory of Nyssa, who are called the ‘three great Cappadocians,’ after their location in Cappadocia, in eastern Asia Minor.

In the fifth century St. Augustine of Hippo (not to be confused with the 6th century Augustine of Canterbury who was a Benedictine monk) wrote a monastic rule that has influenced modern day monastic life, including the Ursuline religious order, which runs the oldest institution for learning for women in Canada. That order, founded in 1639, is still operating in Quebec City, Province of Quebec, Canada, today.

One man whose rule is broadly used today is St. Benedict of Nursia, in Italy, who lived in the sixth century. His Rule is centred on the Eucharist and the Daily Offices, services which were notable for the plentiful reading of the scriptures in an organized pattern. He lived from 480 to 547 AD, and his writing has been influential through the centuries, and still today, in how to have a rule of life that helps one live as a dedicated follower of Jesus. His purpose was good, ‘to establish a school for the Lord’s service,’

(Rule 1998, 5), and his written Rule described what that would look like. He covered topics such as obedience, humility, the duties of monks to the abbot, how to celebrate Holy Communion, prayer services, disciplines, and what life in the monastery entailed. Each of his topics made its argument based on the scriptures. He said, commendably, that “what page, what passage of the inspired books of the Old and New Testaments is not the truest of guides for human life? What book of the holy Fathers does not resoundingly summon us along the true way to reach the Creator (Rule, 69)? His Rules, and those of others from the life of the early Christian Church, would help the church preserve its tradition on into the Middle Ages, when new forms of monasticism were again established.

Benedict’s particular emphasis on the hours of prayer, in particular, would influence the reform of the English church in the 16th century, and take the whole concept of a Rule of Life to a new level. An ordered prayer life, hitherto restricted to the monasteries where it was developed, would now be extended into the parishes, among ordinary Christians who lived in society, not withdrawn from it, nor confined to ‘professional’ or ‘institutional’ Christians. What began as a great resource for growing in faith then, remains a great gift to today’s Anglican Church, through which a form of Anglican Christian discipleship can be continued today. With such a resource available, why would an Anglican Christian look anywhere else for a solidly biblical plan for growing in faith?

Proceeding to the Middle Ages, we see new forms of monasticism also being developed in the Roman Catholic Church, each with their own Rule. But it was the genius of Anglicanism that the Book of Common Prayer expanded the discipline of an

ordered way of Christian living to include all its members. In the 19th Century the Oxford Movement in the Anglican Church began. Those who developed this movement wanted to see older traditions reinstated in the church. This would eventually result in Anglo-Catholicism, which is still a force in the Anglican Church today. It was in connection with this Movement that Anglican Orders began to be established. While some might welcome this development as a recovery of something good that had been lost, it could also be said that it was a step backward from what the 16th century reformers had as their vision, in opening up the Word of God to all people, in a language that could be understood, and developing a way of life in which ordinary Christians could participate, right in their own parish church.

An Adventure in Discipleship

A more contemporary example of the development of Anglican Orders may be seen in a little-known group called The Servants of Christ the King. It seems to have been an early expression of the development of cell groups in the Church of England that would occur in the latter half of the 20th Century. It was formed in 1943 with leadership by the Rev. Roger Lloyd. He had a desire, as did others around him, to serve the Church and assist its growth. Together a small group formed a society that began with ten people, and then birthed other groups, finally, much later, opening up membership to those beyond the Anglican Church and beyond England. As of 2014, the organization announced that it was suspending its activity, but that it was open to how God might guide it to continue in an altered form. When it first organized, in 1943, it composed a

brief Rule of Life to which members were bound, and which was annually renewable.

The Rule stated:

Believing that my life in all its fullness—possessions, personal relationships, time and actions—belongs to God, I hereby reaffirm the promises made for me at Holy Baptism and renewed by me at Confirmation. I believe that God has called me as a Servant of Christ the King through prayer, discipline and fellowship to spread His Kingdom. I therefore hold myself bound by the following obligations, and by the Rule of my company:

1. To worship at least once a week in Church, however difficult that may be, to receive Holy Communion regularly and frequently, to spend a definite time daily in prayer and Bible reading, and to learn ever more of the Christian Faith.
2. To seek through the company, to which I belong, and through every means in my power, to draw others into the fellowship of the Church, and to claim for the Rule of Christ every part of human life, both in my country, and throughout the world.
3. To be a loyal member of the Anglican Communion in the province and diocese in which I live, and to be obedient to the unanimous decisions of my Company (Lloyd 1955, 38-39).

The interesting story of their growth and development may be found in a small book by the Rev. Roger Lloyd entitled 'An Adventure in Discipleship.' In this book, originally written in 1953, Mr. Lloyd describes the process by which this group was formed, and how it developed in the first ten years of its existence. Its Rule is very similar to the Rule of Life that is found in the 1962 Canadian Book of Common Prayer. However, it is different because it reserves the Rule for those within the Church of England that decide to become part of the Servants of Christ the King. To its credit, it does not seek to compete, only complement and serve, the local parish. The group decided early in its existence that it would not keep the word 'Order' in its title, because the members felt that it might make the group inaccessible to some people (Lloyd, 53). In comparison, within the Anglican Church in North America, a group formed in 2009 that shares similarities to this group. Called 'The Order of the Daughters of the Holy Cross,' it has a four-fold Rule of Prayer, Service, Study, and Evangelism, and is open to Anglican

women within the ACNA. However, it is limited to women who study and take the vows, and so has a more limited value in the development of discipleship for the whole church, than did the Servants of Christ the King, begun over fifty years before this Order. Like the Servants of Christ the King, the Daughters of the Holy Cross seek to uphold the local parishes of their members.

In contrast, the inclusive vision that the 16th Century Anglican reformers had about how Christian growth in discipleship might become a formed habit within a congregation, and not be separated from regular life, was a good one, and deserves to be continued. How individual Christians grow in their faith in an Anglican context today is not a new question. It was present in the 16th century, and, indeed, answered there. The question about contemporary discipleship was in my mind long before I became a member of the Anglican Church. It came through observation of my own life and of the lives of others in churches where I was a member. The question remained after I became an Anglican, and after I was ordained. I recall, for example, when I was serving a parish in Newfoundland, looking at the confirmation curriculum being used, and seeing that it was very different from the confirmation material used in our family's home church in Ontario. Why was there not some Canadian Anglican resource for discipleship, that was broadly used across the country? Except for the year-long course in Newfoundland, I did not see much written or used either for catechism or for any continued growth among confirmed adults, from an Anglican perspective. There were an abundance of Bible study booklets and a relatively new course called Alpha, but apart from that, I did not see much else. It seemed that everyone did what he wanted. This caused mixed results.

When I later served in an Anglican church in Toronto, the need seemed even more pressing, but the diocesan resources for spiritual growth, in fact, notably lacking. The best resources were those suggested by colleagues who had been in ordained ministry longer than I had, and I was grateful for the level of collegiality that I sought out, and found, not only in Toronto, but as I contacted colleagues in other areas of the country where I came to know like-minded Anglican clergy who were also concerned with nurturing their parishes. And yet, the suggestions made did not seem to be always applicable or comprehensive.

Developing Resources

The commencement of my Doctor of Ministry studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, in Church Planting and Multiplication, came about at the same time as I was beginning to notice that many evangelicals, Anglicans included, were starting to address the topic of church growth in a different way than previous decades, which, in my opinion, had seen a lot of church growth material based on how to use marketing and entertainment to attract crowds with the latest music or methods that would work for any kind of church (conservative or liberal) that was interested in getting more numbers. But now, for example, in the writings of Alan Hirsch, Neil Cole, Ed Stetzer, Dallas Willard, Steve Addison, Thom Rainer, Robert Webber, and Timothy Keller, resources were addressing the issue from a variety of theological bases, but mostly seeking to be biblical in application. Online presences such as the Verge Network were producing articles, and conferences such as the Exponential Conference in the USA

were continuing to attract numbers. Many of these people were Americans, with few Canadians yet involved (at least among people with whom I was acquainted—not surprising, given the relative sizes of the two countries). The word ‘discipleship’ was appearing more and more. Leaders were discovering that a ‘crowd’ is not equivalent to ‘followers of Jesus.’ Of course, when we read the Gospels, we notice the same thing there. There were the crowds, that grew larger and larger, and then there were the followers, who had a challenge to keep following. At this time, also, I was noticing that some who would not describe themselves as evangelical were also beginning to use the same language about church planting, as a way to promote much needed church growth in their shrinking denominations. In general, however, there seemed to be an attempt to discuss church growth in a more biblical way than the earlier church growth materials in the latter decades of the 20th century.

But the question remained: how to promote Christian growth that becomes a way of life, and is not dependent on occasional programmes to keep up the interest level. How do Christians consistently mature in their faith? Without an answer to that question, all of the church growth and church planting methods in the world would do nothing to strengthen the Christian Church. Yes, we would have more churches. We would be able to keep the members by doing the same kind of marketing as secular entrepreneurs use, perhaps translating it into Christian language. And we might succeed, for a time, in terms of numbers, at least until some new and better brand came along.

The Book of Common Prayer

The beginning of the answer to that question came when I discovered the Rule of

Life in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer. It came out of wondering if perhaps we should look as Anglicans at what we already have, and simplify the principles of church planting by using what we already have, and stating it clearly. Searching for information about the Rule of Life found in the BCP led me to further resources that include both Roman Catholic and Protestant sources, but not many that are specifically Anglican, which also include all Anglicans in a parish. In addition, any Anglican resources that I found display a variety of theological perspectives, some of which list secondary matters as essential. Therefore, some are more useful references than others. Some of the sources that I have found use the term “Rule of Life,” while others do not. These latter sources do refer to discipleship and to following Jesus. So, without using the term ‘Rule of Life’ they are dealing with the topic of Christian growth, describing an ordered way of life (a ‘Rule’ is essentially about order), without actually using the term.

Missionary Methods: St. Paul’s or Ours?

An early influence on how I have come to look at the question of discipleship and the Rule of Life is a book by Roland Allen, written in 1912, entitled *Missionary Methods: St. Paul’s or Ours*. I read the book while still a teenager. Allen was a missionary in northern China who felt that the methods used in his day were inferior to how St. Paul went about starting churches. His emphasis, which he derived from the writings of St. Paul, was on the ability of the Holy Spirit to build the church. Allen wrote in a traditional Anglican context, so what he has to say is pertinent to anyone seeking to develop an

Anglican congregation today. Anglican Bishop Lesslie Newbigin writes in his Foreward to the 1962 edition of the book,

In Allen's thought—so far as I understand it—the central place given to the work of the Spirit in no way implied a lessening of *the importance of the ordered life of the Church* (emphasis added) as one divine society bound together in a single visible fellowship with the Lord and His apostles, and visibly united in the sacramental life. If he does not speak much of this, it is because he takes it for granted and seeks to gain a hearing for the aspects of the Spirit's work which have been too much neglected in the tradition in which he was nurtured. *To forget this and to read what he says about the work of the Spirit through the spectacles of a tradition which gives little place to order, ministry, and sacrament, can only lead to an atomising of the Church* (emphasis added), which Allen would certainly have repudiated (Allen 1962, iii).

This is important as I look at the Rule of Life today, so that first of all, I can be confident that such an ordered concept is fully Anglican, and secondly, that it is not a substitute for the work of God which powerfully accomplishes the healthy Christian maturity of all Anglican Christians. For me to commend a Rule of Life grows out of my trusting God to work in each life. Allen wanted to simplify the way we do mission, but not to do it simplistically. Of course he was applying his ideas to the 'mission field' in other countries, but today, in the Anglican Church in North America, his ideas for how the church grows biblically are applicable to church plants and congregations alike on this continent. His chapter on The Teaching (Allen, 81-94) argues for a simple form of teaching for those who come to faith, and also criticizes the Church of England for making that teaching too complicated. His argument is that St. Paul left a church soon after its founding, to go elsewhere with the Gospel. What he left with them included the Old Testament, perhaps a short account of Jesus' life, the central teaching of Jesus' death and resurrection, and perhaps the Lord's Prayer. By beginning with simple teaching, and trusting God to do his work, one can form a solid foundation, on which God then can continue to grow the church. I think that this is what a discipleship method using the

traditional form of catechesis (Baptismal Covenant, Ten Commandments, Creed and Lord's Prayer), coupled with the Rule of Life (which we might call in today's terms, 'the executive summary') is trying to do. It is a good way to develop all Anglican Christians into strong, 'biblically faithful, Gospel-sharing Anglican churches.' (Anglican Network in Canada, 2015).

Go Make Learners

I was fortunate enough to be a member of Little Trinity Anglican Church in Toronto in the late 1970's when its associate clergy was the Rev. Bob Brow. His sermons were always thoughtful and provoking, in a way that led the hearer to have to choose a response to Jesus. In his book, 'Go Make Learners,' Brow explains how his conversion and early experience of the Christian faith brought him to espouse a 'discipleship model' for the church. He had been influenced by the writings of Roland Allen, and it shows in how he articulated his own model for ministry:

The Discipleship model holds that Jesus imparted his teaching to disciples. Disciples were enrolled by baptism. Before leaving his disciples, Jesus told his chosen leaders to go into all the world and enroll other disciples from all nations by baptizing them. The baptized were to be taught all that Jesus had imparted to his disciples. In place of his personal presence among them, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to superintend, direct and apply his teaching among the baptized. The definition of a Christian is therefore a learner, a disciple under instruction by the Holy Spirit. A local church consists of the group of disciples gathered for teaching by the Holy Spirit in that place (Brow 1981, 15).

Along with the Rev. Harry Robinson, Brow used that method at Little Trinity, where our family found our first Anglican home. We saw first-hand how a variety of people could come together on a Sunday morning and be challenged about their faith in a way that made a difference the other six days of the week. It was puzzling to my husband and me,

coming out of a different ecclesiastical background (Baptist), how an evangelical church could welcome in such a variety of people, who were in various stages of faith. When I asked the rector how it was possible for a church to be that inclusive, and expressed doubt about how some might consider themselves members without having come to a personal faith in Christ, he replied that because the Gospel was preached clearly every Sunday, those who came with no saving faith either were converted or self-selected themselves out of the church. He believed that the Holy Spirit would do his work of calling, and those who heard would either hear that call, or choose to walk away. While Bob Brow would later make some rather more controversial statements, at least at that point (in the 1980's), his model of discipleship was tested and true, and I was able to see first-hand how it applied. The framework for this discipleship growth in the church was a system of 'koinonia' groups, that were encouraged by the clergy to grow and multiply. New people were invited to attend, and again, I found out personally the value of the small group in Christian growth. My husband and I attended a weekly koinonia group, and eventually, as the group grew, became leaders in a new group that met in our home. Such groups were good for fellowship and support, and some had particular ministry outreach (for example, our group combined with two other groups to sponsor refugees), but still, the question remained in my mind about how to see consistent spiritual growth, not just the experience of comfort at being acquainted with others, in order that on Sunday we did not feel so lost in such a large congregation. As I look now at the value of having every person in the parish trained and encouraged to have a personal Rule of Life (not just those in a weekday group), I must not forget that it is God who transforms the life, and he is not limited in how he does that. But I think knowing that there was a

resource called The Rule of Life would have been helpful to me and to our small group at that time. It would have been a constant reminder of how as Anglican Christians we were to grow in faith. It would have allowed God's spiritual gifts to have been developed in all the members, and would have enhanced the model for church that was being used in the congregation at large.

Following Jesus: First Steps on the Way

There was a very helpful book written in 1993 by the Rev. Harold Percy of the Anglican Diocese of Toronto. Mr. Percy had been a curate at Little Trinity, and subsequently moved to Port Credit, a town near Toronto, where he had a lot of success in adding new people to his congregation. The 1990's were called the Decade of Evangelism in the Anglican Communion, and so there was a lot of talk about evangelism and growing churches. Percy's book, published during that time, was called 'Following Jesus: First Steps on the Way,' and was intended as an introductory course on the Christian faith to those who were new in the congregation. Its structure covered the basics of faith in six lessons. As I compare them now (2016) to the topics contained in the Rule of Life (BCP, 555), I can see that they explore those same topics. The book was followed by a study guide written by the Rev. Michael Knowles, now on staff at McMaster Divinity School in Hamilton, Ontario. I employed the course in a two-point parish in Newfoundland and found that it was well-suited for use as a Lenten study. There were some notable things to learn from the book. One was the description of how balanced spiritual growth needs to involve a number of areas of life, and for a Christian

to be well rounded in spiritual growth, all areas needed to be addressed. This is also what the Rule of Life is says. Percy writes:

Careful, balanced attention to each of these elements (Scripture, community, worship, prayer, ministry and stewardship) will result in healthy, balanced spiritual development. In the following chapters we will consider each element in turn.

God is inviting you to become more than you have ever imagined you could be. Following Jesus, growing to be like him, and sharing in God's work is an adventure that lasts a lifetime (Percy 1993, 9).

I do not know how long Mr. Percy made use of this course in his parish (he is now retired). In the past, he had been involved in the Canadian Essentials Movement (forerunner of the Anglican Network in Canada). Currently he is connected with Wycliffe College (University of Toronto) in their College of Evangelism, as a conference teacher and coach for a small group of clergy in the diocese of Toronto. I consider his book to be one of the building blocks that influenced my thinking about spiritual growth, especially in his emphasis on the importance of balance.

Anglican Church in North America Canons

In the canons of the Anglican Church in North America and those of the Anglican Network in Canada, there is no reference to the desirability of a Rule of Life for those who are members of parishes. However, in both organizations' canons, there is a description of the duties of lay members. In the ACNA Canon 10, Section 2, we read the following duties of lay people:

1. To worship God, the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, every Lord's Day in a Church unless reasonably prevented,

2. To engage regularly in the reading and study of Holy Scripture and the Doctrine of the Church as found in Article 1 of the Constitution of this Church;
3. To observe their baptismal vows, to lead an upright and sober life, and not give scandal to the Church;
4. To present their children and those they have led to the Lord for baptism and confirmation;
5. To give regular financial support to the Church, with the biblical tithe as the minimum standard of giving;
6. To practice forgiveness daily according to our Lord's teaching;
7. To receive worthily the Sacrament of Holy Communion as often as reasonable;
8. To observe the feasts and fasts of the Church set forth in the Anglican formularies;
9. To continue his or her instruction in the Faith so as to remain an effective minister for the Lord Jesus Christ;
10. To devote themselves to the ministry of Christ among those who do not know Him, utilizing the gifts that the Holy Spirit gives them, for the effective extension of Christ's Kingdom (The Anglican Church in North America Constitution and Canons 2014, 9-10).

Article 8. I.8.2 of the ANiC canons are substantially the same, with the following differences:

- (a) To worship one God in Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, every Lord's day in a church unless reasonably prevented
- (b) To engage regularly in the reading and study of Holy Scripture and subscribe to the Doctrine of ANiC and the Province as found in Article 1.1 of the Constitution;
- (c) (Same as ACNA #3 above)
- (d) To present those they have led to the Lord for baptism and confirmation, and to present their children for baptism and encourage them to make an affirmation of their faith through adult confirmation;
- (e) To provide care for the poor and those in need;
- (f) To give regular financial support to ANiC and their ANiC parish, with the Biblical tithe in mind as the minimum standard of giving (Canons and Bylaws of the Diocese of the Anglican Network in Canada 2014, 21).

Both of these lists expand upon what we find in the Rule of Life (BCP, 555), describing more directly what being regular in church attendance means, and what the offering of money according to his means should involve. Some of the additions are similar to the instruction that is found within the catechism of the Canadian BCP. Would these provincial and diocesan Canons be a good resource to use in connection

with an Anglican Christian's periodic reflection and framing of a personal Rule of Life? Both of these lists are more directive than the Rule of Life, naming the topics as duties. The question might be asked: why does the Anglican Christian who wants to follow Jesus put into practice the teaching of Jesus? Is it through 'duty' or through thankfulness? The Rule of Life does not use the word 'duty,' but while the BCP does outline what the work of the confirmed Anglican is to look like, its tone is gentler, even though its aim is definitely for the Anglican Christian to grow and mature spiritually in all areas of life. My conclusion is that despite the aforementioned canons on the duties of the laity in the ACNA dioceses, there is still need in St. Chad's parish situation for a Rule of Life for every confirmed Anglican Christian, and that such a Rule is sufficient as a guide for how to develop discipleship that is faithfully biblical and Anglican.

Standards for Clergy

One important continuing value of the Rule of Life is its belief that 'every Christian man or woman should *from time to time* (emphasis added) frame for himself a Rule of Life' (BCP, 555). This gives a healthy picture of the Church where all are together, clergy and laity alike, and all need a periodic, personal update. The standards for one's walk with Jesus are the same for all. So it is interesting to see that so far in the documents, the only reference to Rule of Life that I discovered is in a paper that was adopted by the College of Bishops in 2011, called 'Preparation Standards for Seminaries

of the Anglican Church in North America and Approved Anglican Tracks. In it we find the following:

Defining an Anglican Education/Formation for Presbyter/Priests and Deacons

Spiritual formation is a process which is more than an introduction to the faith and practices of the Church. For Anglicans it must set the standard for a personal Rule of Life (1) rooted in Scripture, the Catholic Creeds, the Thirty-nine Articles, and the historic liturgy. Ordinands must understand and have integrated the key elements of Anglican life and practice and thus be able to model and convey the life of Christ to others.

(1) A Rule of Life is defined as an intentional commitment to spiritual disciplines and personal discipleship (ACNA Preparation Standards, 1).

It is good that the ACNA demands a high standard for its ordinands. As seen in the duties of the laity in Canon 10 above, it demands a not so high standard for lay people who are members of an ACNA parish (omitting any reference to a Rule of Life). My application of the Rule of Life to all parish members, including clergy, shows clearly that the need for a Rule of Life is the same for ordained and lay people, whereas the ACNA canons and documents talk of various duties specific to several categories of people found in the ACNA churches: bishops, priests, deacons, and laity. This could be understood to imply levels of spiritual growth, and if that understanding is taken, there is then room for an individual lay member to think that following Jesus has different levels of obligation. This is not helpful to the health of the parish, because it then allows for the sentiment, ‘that’s the rector’s job.’

More Recent Books

In more recent books, one can see the theme of an ordered discipleship being explored, sometimes as authors have looked at their environment for models from society to use (for example, Neil Cole's book, *Search and Rescue*, in which he uses his former experience as a lifeguard to show how to be Jesus' disciple today), or, others, who look at models from the past that resulted in church growth, to help them find a way forward (such as George G. Hunter III's *The Celtic Way of Evangelism*, or Dallas Willard's *The Spirit of the Disciplines*). These authors have written from a variety of denominational backgrounds. Their desire to continue with the way God has worked in the past, and connect to their own situations, is commendable. Both are necessary. Neil Cole's group produces a brochure to guide people in churches that use his Life Transformation Group strategy for discipleship. It contains much that is helpful for getting discipleship into the everyday life of ordinary people. His plan is a simple one: to organize people in small (two or three persons) groups for accountability in their spiritual growth. The strategy is simple enough to do: confess sin to one another; read the Bible; pray specifically for souls to be saved. Included is a detailed list of questions to help the discussion and prayer. The group works together, and when it grows numerically, it divides into new small groups. Its attraction is that it fits our current busy society, and it gets down to the basics. As a balanced tool for discipleship and an ordered Rule of Life, I think that it omits some necessary topics. The Rule of Life, with its six topics, is still brief enough in our fast-paced world to remember, can be used as a basis for a small group pattern, and it also links the small group to the entire congregation. So, while Cole's pattern is effective,

I think that in an Anglican context, a pattern based on the Rule of Life provides more unity and connects better to the parish as a whole.

The writings of Dallas Willard are well known, often quoted, and have been influential for others who are exploring the topic of discipleship. Instead of the term 'discipleship,' he prefers the phrase 'spiritual formation.' For him spiritual disciplines are how we train ourselves to do what Jesus commands. In his book, *The Great Omission*, his list of spiritual disciplines emphasizes 'solitude and silence, fasting and frugality, study and worship, service and submission... (they are) 'integral parts of any reliable program of spiritual formation' (Willard 2006, 114). While reading two of his books, I was impressed with his style of writing and his dedication to the topic of spiritual growth. His early years were formed as part of a Baptist church, in which he was ordained, but he was also influenced by the Quakers. The main feature of his work that might resonate with an Anglican Christian approach to discipleship is his emphasis on an ongoing process of growth. He seems to believe that a disciplined approach to discipleship, if followed by Christians, in a congregational setting, would transform our world and bring in the Kingdom. I do think that if the world saw Christians modelling their life on Jesus in an orderly way, the world would be affected for good, but that good would be the salvation of individuals, and would not result in the world in general becoming better and better. To me, that is not a biblical way of looking at ecclesiology and eschatology. However, I think that his emphasis on process is valuable, since in the past, Anglican churches have often launched their confirmands in early teenage years, and there has been no spiritual growth after that. Indeed, the confirmation service has often been seen by youth to be a graduation from church, to which they never need return.

There is a growing awareness of Rule of Life amongst individuals and groups of people within several North American denominations, as some examples which follow will show. Some of these new ventures look back to the beginning centuries of the church, while others look at monastic developments in the Middle Ages. In addition to individuals within denominations, some congregations now frame their membership requirements in the form of rules to which members must ascribe (a church covenant). While these rules appear often to relate to the particular church setting, and the congregations' desire for members to live differently from their surrounding communities, still, it is indicative of the growing realization that being a Christian must mean something in the life lived. The question is, how does one frame a Rule of Life that is a helpful resource and faithful to the scriptures and the truth handed down through the apostles, and not merely a legalistic membership requirement that just attempts to control the appearance of sin in the church?

A recent movement in North America called the 'New Monasticism' looks back to some form of community life where people lived according to a rule. One such group says that it is formed from Christians within churches, but operates apart from, although in support of, the churches, requiring a formal agreement with the group and the church, and space and promotion of its activities. Involvement with this group was urged upon me by someone shortly after the beginning of our Network affiliation in 2008. I discovered that beginnings for churches are times in which church plants may become prime targets for all kinds of ideas that people with their own agenda are pushing. The Rule of Life which I am proposing does not share that kind of private vision. I mention this example because when things are changing in the church scene, as they are in the

new North American expression of Anglicanism, such ideas will arise, offering a panacea for church needs, but which are really a distraction from the real vision. In contrast, I have seen a solid expression of the example of 'new monasticism' that came from those who genuinely wanted renewal in the church, and who thought that by forming a community committed to a Rule, and putting it under the supervision of the local church, it would then be in a position of leading renewal. In this well-intentioned expression of 'new monasticism,' an Anglican church within the past ten years formed a community that met for worship at a different hour than the regular (and dying) congregation, under the guidance of a team commissioned by the church for this work. The community developed, and received the prayers of those in other like-minded Anglican churches who were excited that such a project might be started in the inner city. Before too long, the original leader (a priest) had left and is now a teacher in another area of the country. The church brought in a new rector who, by contrast, is fully on side with the inclusive agenda of the diocese. The new community that was set up for renewal has now been well co-opted for a progressive expression of religion that intends to grow the congregation without reference to the apostolic faith.

A second example of the development of personal and community Rule of Life may be seen in the writing of Stephen Macchia, who has written a book on Rule of Life, called *Crafting a Rule of Life: an Invitation to the Well-Ordered Way*. This thoughtful book has much to commend it for a broad variety of denominations. Mr. Macchia's background is as pastor of a non-denominational church and teacher at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. He is also founder of Leadership Transformations, which seeks to renew church leaders in their Christian walk, and through them, renew their churches.

The organization has served many evangelical churches and groups locally in New England, and far beyond.

The book makes use of the language used currently in evangelical churches, such as ‘vision’ and ‘mission’ and seeks to connect these to the framing of a personal rule of life. The author describes in his introduction what he means by a personal rule of life, saying, “Your personal rule of life is a holistic description of the Spirit-empowered rhythms and relationships that create, redeem, sustain and transform the life God invites you to humbly fulfil for Christ’s glory (Macchia 2012, 14). He shows that order, or ‘rule,’ is a normal part of everyone’s life, as we build habits for daily life. He commends a Christian rule of life as a way to “support or enable us to do the things we want and need to do. ...clarify our deepest values, our most important relationships, our most authentic hopes and dreams, our most meaningful work, our highest priorities...to live with intention and purpose in the present moment (Macchia 2012, 14).

The value of Macchia’s book is that he speaks in the language that evangelicals generally use in talking about goals, and this helps him then to introduce rule of life as a method for Christian living in the way that evangelical church leaders want for their congregations and themselves. He has to make this link in this way because he is talking for the most part to those whose churches do not have a history with the Rule of Life. I find it interesting that the generic concept of a rule of life is now being written about in the evangelical church milieu, perhaps in a similar way that the adoption of material from more liturgical sources is also now being used in some evangelical churches. The value of Macchia’s book in my context is in how it commends a personal rule of life to all Christians, and how for the most part it centres it in the context of the church. Macchia

also offers a one-page resource at the end of the book with ‘resources for creating a communal rule of life,’ which he suggests might be helpful for individual congregations to use as a shared covenant.

In my context, there is not the same need to make an argument for having a personal rule of life, since it is already stated in the BCP as a valuable exercise for the confirmed Anglican Christian to do periodically, as a way of continuing the growth that was already present at the time of confirmation. Also, because Macchia does not write from a liturgical background, he develops his material in each chapter from a scripture passage and a story about some notable Christian of today or years gone by. Out of this framework he then ends the chapter with a series of questions designed to draw out from the reader an understanding of where he is in his own life in relation to the topics covered in the book (he covers many parts of daily life). The reader is then in a position to write out his own current understanding of how he wants to live. This results in a personal rule of life that is meaningful to the reader, since it mirrors his own thoughts and feelings and insights (guided by the scriptures and biographical stories cited).

There is another value in Macchia’s book and his current Christian ministry: his interest in the formation of Christian leaders. To develop the Christian leaders is to develop the churches. I think that this is a natural progression, and valuable for the growth of a denomination. In a theoretical way I have been exploring that particular aspect of Rule of Life both in a questionnaire sent to all ANiC clergy, which asks questions about discipleship and Rule of Life, and in a practical way in the development of a yearly silent retreat for clergy. This has been held for two years now, for southern Ontario Network clergy, and I am currently planning for the year 2016. This retreat

intended is to allow clergy the time to have three days of reflection on the scriptures, and a full schedule of the offices, done in silence so that there is time to listen to God. When I began this project, it was not because I was consciously looking at a Benedictine approach to spirituality, but looking back, it fits with that kind of rule of life. It is certainly one of the emphases I have in parish life, to encourage parishioners in daily prayer, the BCP as a resource.

Perhaps as a third example of the development of the Rule of Life that I might also mention is a small series of short booklets published by Anglican Essentials Canada beginning in 2006, initially to address pressing issues within the Anglican Church of Canada. They are now available for download on the Anglican Network in Canada website. They have continued to be developed periodically. One such booklet is called ‘Taking Discipleship Seriously,’ by Timothy J. Ernst (published in 2007, the year before the Anglican Network in Canada was formed). In it, he commends the spiritual practices of scripture reading, prayer, common life, and evangelism as necessary parts of how one becomes a disciple. He says that ‘for decades the churches of Canada, including the Anglican Church, have not taken discipleship seriously. ACC congregations are riddled with “undisciplined disciples” (Jess Moody) and many of the church’s problems are due to the ubiquitous presence and influence of these undisciplined believers’ (Ernst 2007, 4).

How sad it is that the resource for developing the habit of discipleship was there all along, and could have been useful in helping Anglican Christian leaders to be more intentional in their disciple-making activities. When one looks at the Rule of Life on page 555 of the Book of Common Prayer (published in Canada in 1962) and sees how its topics fully cover the picture of the early church as given in Acts 2: 42-47, it is surprising

how this would not have motivated leaders to use this resource, and work at the local level to develop strong biblical parishes, fully Christian and fully Anglican. However, the world's tacit belief that we are constantly improving infects the Church as well, and when we face difficulties, we may be seduced into searching for new ways to solve our problems. Sometimes it is the old ways that need to be revisited and reformed into a fresh contemporary solution to the problem of following Jesus in our day. The challenge will never go away. Jesus' command to follow him is a day by day challenge, in every age.

A fourth example, and the most helpful book that I have used in the parish, is John Stott's 'The Radical Disciple: Some Neglected Aspects of Our Calling.' This short little book, Stott's last (published in 2010, the year before he died), is only 142 pages long, and only about five by seven inches in size. It does not mention specifically the 'Rule of Life.' In eight chapters it outlines eight important and perhaps neglected aspects of discipleship in modern times, including nonconformity, Christlikeness, maturity, creation care, simplicity, balance, dependence, and death. These traits are unpacked with the wisdom that the author's age and biblical insights makes possible. They cover a wide variety of the activities and experiences of daily life, with great clarity. The style of the book is brief and conversational, which can be helpful in churches whose members are busy. I consider this format better than a book using points and alliteration, since that is not always helpful for readers who do not encounter that format in their daily life. So, while it does not give a history of the Rule of Life, or help the reader to formulate a Rule of Life, it does provide the biblical background for what discipleship is, and what it looks like in daily life. The reader using this book would be able to consider from its teaching whether or not his or her discipleship was balanced. He or she would also understand

from this book that any formulation of a Rule of Life must not simply be a set of do's and don'ts, but a picture of one's character as a Christian believer. The eight aspects of discipleship are general in nature, but able to be specific in application, as Stott gives some practical examples from his own life to get the reader thinking. Stott includes a short bibliography at the end, and encourages his readers to keep on reading about the topic. The list is short enough to help readers feel confident that they might achieve some success with using it! So, for its simplicity, clarity, and Anglican setting, it fits well as a resource to use when reviewing the personal Rule of Life found in the BCP (Canada).

To learn about the history of groups and individuals developing a Rule of Life is beneficial, in order to see how widely it has been in use from the early centuries of the Christian Church. It helps us appreciate the reasons that Christians have done this, and how they have put it into practice. It also shows how having a rule of life can be helpful, but sadly, if not done right, may lead them astray. This is valuable for anyone who is an Anglican Christian to know, so that he may not be led astray into rules that bring death, and not life, law and not gospel.

And so, finally, that brings me back to a commendation given by the writers of 'To Be a Christian: an Anglican Catechism,' (a recently published ACNA resource) who say, 'I need a rule of life because my fallen nature is disordered, distracted, and self-centred...The Church invites me to its life of Common Prayer as a rule of life' (To Be a Christian 2013, 100).

CHAPTER FOUR

PROJECT DESIGN

Introduction

When I began work on the Doctor of Ministry studies at Gordon-Conwell, I had a number of questions in my mind about how parishes grow. How does a parish develop so that sharing faith, planting churches, and growing spiritually will occur? For each of us who joined the Network, our situations had changed. The development of the Network from its 2008 beginning did not happen in quite the way that leaders thought it would. We were launching out into new territory with little training in how churches grow and develop. Often the leaders had been part of parishes that were well established. Some were in areas that were experiencing a lot of change or decline. The Anglican resources available were minimal, and some of them were intended to set the church on a different course from its founding documents. Much courage and faith was found in those who dared to take a stand for a biblical Anglican expression of Christian faith, but almost subconsciously, they also brought along into the new church a way of doing things imported from the very situation from which they sought to escape. And so, there were challenges among the leaders and as they faced former colleagues who now saw their new affiliation very differently from the way they did. It made it difficult to have a unified Anglican identity and to build trust. To complicate things further, the environment in which Network leaders served was completely changed. There were new

challenges, including legal issues, evictions, and the consequent need for new locations for Sunday services, and even just the previously assumed ‘things’ of ministry—books, music, printing, and so on.

From the beginning, St. Chad’s was interested in reaching out to the community. This would prove an ongoing challenge since the parish was in rental space and through circumstances beyond its control, was forced to relocate periodically. While the total distance from our original location has never been over nine kilometers (5.6 miles) in our subsequent locations, the personality of the neighbourhoods in which we meet has changed. Over the past eight years, I can identify seven different neighbourhoods in which we have held services on Sundays. We have members who come from yet other neighbourhoods. Consequently, I like and identify with the story of St. Paul’s evangelization of Philippi and the various types of people who responded to the Gospel and became part of the church at Philippi, since it shows that people of faith can come together in one church out of many different circumstances.

Over time, I had a number of informal conversations with nine nearby Network clergy (all in Ontario) who were part of a group of clergy meeting monthly to pray and have lunch together. I wanted to know how important discipleship was for their congregations. I asked if they had ever considered the Rule of Life in the BCP as a guide to discipleship. The responses were varied. One of the nine did say that he asked people to consider a Rule of Life and that he had used the BCP outline as an example of what they might consider. His congregation had its own covenant that members had to sign as part of the membership process. For his parish, long term discipleship occurred through Life Groups, which meet in homes.

Two other clergy did not identify any discipleship plan, saying instead that they were both in new church plants and felt that the plan would become clear as their plants grew.

One colleague felt strongly that discipleship should be called ‘following Jesus.’ He seemed, by the examples he gave, to see discipleship normally coming from the clergy (not the laity) on a one-on-one basis with those who were ready to develop leadership roles in the congregation. He did not identify a plan, but believed that whatever he did should be real and natural.

Another person indicated that he saw discipleship as doing a variety of series, some Anglican and some from other denominations. For example, he mentioned a new course they were considering, called ‘A Step Further Discipleship.’ (<http://www.adiscipleshipcourse.com/>). This is a course developed by the Rev. Peter Moore, Dean and President Emeritus of Trinity School for Ministry. It can be used by people after going through an Alpha course. Its website contains recommendations from a number of clergy in the USA.

Another colleague uses Alpha and its follow-up courses for discipleship, and a (non-Anglican) book that covers the basics of Christian life. He hoped that members would use the book themselves and then continue to use it as they brought along people to mentor.

One colleague living outside of Ontario had previously been connected to the Anglican Renewal Movement and had led renewal courses within the Anglican Church of Canada. After joining the Network, he continued to offer short (weekend) courses to any interested parishes, and these courses might contain discipleship topics. None of the

courses referred specifically to the Rule of Life. One additional resource that he mentioned, and which St. Chad's decided to use following my conversation with him, was the Discipleship Explored course, from a Church of England parish, All Souls Church, Langham Place, London. It does not mention Rule of Life, but the concepts taught in it are compatible with the Rule of Life, and provide a good introduction to what it means to follow Jesus. It is used after a course called Christianity Explored, a course which St. Chad's has also begun to use.

One of the clergy indicated to me that it was not very important for him to develop an Anglican Christian form of discipleship. Yet another felt that he was not in a position to consider discipleship in a serious way, since his congregation did not have their own building. He felt that while the leaders thought discipleship was important, it was occurring more or less in the home groups, which takes the form of Bible study groups.

In all of this informal conversation, I was beginning to get the sense that perhaps some leaders were like me, looking for something that would work. They were somewhat interested in discipleship through periodic courses, one-on-one mentoring, home groups, or getting out into their communities to witness by word and/or action. But it was also becoming clear to me that there was a need for further conversation about this. As clergy we were learning how to share our joys and sorrows in our new situations and learning how to trust again. As I reflected on these conversations, I began to think that the clergy could profit from some time away to sit with God, and be refreshed. And so, this proved to be a catalyst the Southern Ontario Silent Retreat for Clergy. While it is not specifically confined to Rule of Life or discipleship, it allows for a time of worship and

prayer, in an ordered daily setting of the offices (Morning Prayer, Holy Communion, noon prayers, evening prayer and compline). While this may seem like an aside to the work that I am doing on Rule of Life in the parish, I think it does relate as an example of how life-giving can be an Anglican Christian expression of the spiritual disciplines that are commended in the Rule of Life, and is a necessary corollary. So, now, rather than spend a lot of time talking about Rule of Life beyond the parish, I just organize the silent retreat once year, under the direction of our bishop, and, each time, hope that it revives interest in the benefits of having an ordered spiritual life.

Questionnaire for Rectors

The next step after the above preliminary informal discussion I had with colleagues was the preparation of a questionnaire to find out how all rectors across the Anglican Network in Canada were viewing and implementing discipleship in their parishes.

So, in July 2013, the Network central office in Burlington sent out on my behalf a letter requesting feedback about discipleship in an Anglican context. The information that I wanted to collect would be anonymous. I would not have access to the clergy list personally; it would be sent out with a cover letter from the Right Reverend Charlie Masters, diocesan bishop of the Anglican Network in Canada, to those in charge of parishes and church plants across the country, but not to associate clergy. It would also be sent out to the bishops who were active in ministry (four in number). In total, the email was sent out to just over seventy individuals.

Although I had included as an incentive with my preface, the offer to make the results available after they were processed, the total number of respondents was 24, and, except for one person, none were interested in the results of the survey. Two months after the email was sent out, I was able to phone church/church plant leaders across the country to see if they had received and replied to my survey. The survey was available online for them on a commercial survey site called SurveyMonkey. I did this follow-up in October of that year, after the busy weeks that I expected most clergy would experience during September. I especially wanted to make sure that they had received the email request, and that they had access to the online survey. As a result, I was able to talk to, or leave a message with, about forty-four leaders. Others, I was unable to contact. Some wanted the email re-sent. Some said they either had done the survey or would do it. Some said they would call back, but did not. Some had numbers that had been disconnected. For some, the contact information was incorrect. The responses were varied. However, I was able to have some beneficial conversations with those who were obviously interested in the topic, and who shared with me their hopes and fears. This was just another indication of the need that I was seeing for clergy leaders to have time together for the renewal of their own call. Both the questionnaire and the responses may be found in Appendices B and C.

It was surprising to me that not all clergy decided to take the twenty minutes needed to complete the survey, but I was grateful for the twenty-four who did. I was told by the central office that a one-third response was very good, given their experience in similar mailings. Even at this point (two years later) I still wonder what this level of participation says about the collegiality of the clergy at this early stage in the Network's existence. I think that perhaps it points to a greater need to develop relationships. When

the leaders do not connect, it says something about the kind of discipleship that leaders are modelling, and how we are following Jesus, as Anglican Christian leaders united in our faith.

The questionnaire had two parts. Part I consisted of ten questions, only two of which required written answers. The others were all done in multiple choice format. The questions were:

1. The word 'discipleship' is widely used. How important is the development of discipleship in your ministry context?
2. What are the top three ways your parish/plant develops discipleship? (Alpha Course; 'Christianity Explored' series; confirmation classes; Advent course; Lenten course; new members' class; one-on-one mentoring; sermons; small group Bible studies; adult Sunday School; informal 'coffee and conversation'; prayer walks; book studies; parish missions; other (please specify))
3. If you answered 'Book Studies' above, what is/are the name of the book(s)?
4. I consider that the current level of our parish/plant development of discipleship is: very satisfactory; satisfactory; needs improvement; unsatisfactory; in development.
5. How important is it to your ministry that you use Anglican resources in teaching about and developing discipleship in your parish/plant?
6. Have you ever used the Rule of Life (p.555, Book of Common Prayer, 1962) in your parish/plant as a pattern for teaching about discipleship?
7. If you answered 'yes' to question 5, have you seen measurable results in discipleship development from using the pattern of the six topics found in the Rule of Life? (very favourable; favourable; somewhat favourable; negligible)
8. Which of the following areas do you consider to be important elements of the development of discipleship in the parish/plant: personal evangelism; daily prayer; daily Bible reading; regular attendance at worship; regular financial giving to the work of the church; regular attendance at Holy Communion; regular giving to missions; community service (e.g. community volunteer/participant; using one's spiritual gifts for building up the parish/plant; growth in Christ-likeness; other (please specify))
9. Read the Rule of Life (p. 555, BCP, 1962) and indicate whether or not you think that it provides an adequate framework for developing and maintaining discipleship in your parish/plant.
10. In books and online, you can find many definitions of discipleship. What is your parish/plant's definition of discipleship?

Part II of the questionnaire had seven questions:

1. How many years has your parish/plant been associated with the Anglican Network in Canada?

2. If your parish existed before the formation of the Network, for how many years?
3. Over the past 5 years (or less, if your parish/plant is younger than 5 years), would you say that attendance in your parish/plant is: declining; unchanged; growing?
4. How many people are regularly involved in the life of your parish/plant?
5. What is the predominant age range?
6. What is the predominant level of education?
7. What percentage of your parish/plant has ready access to: internet and social media; DVD player; Christian conferences?

In this questionnaire, all answers were voluntary, and no one had to answer all of the questions in order to complete and submit it.

Description of Network Churches

All twenty-four respondents answered the first question in Part II (description of parish). Eleven had been connected with the Network (as of July 2013) for five years (in other words, since the founding year). Five had been associated for four years, two for three years, two for two years, and four for one year or less. Of those parishes that were in existence before the Network started, five parishes were over a hundred years old, and four were less than twenty-five years old. This is a fairly good picture of how the Network has been growing—starting out with a small base, and then growing very gradually each year. Most of those who did the questionnaire said that their parish was either growing or staying the same. Less than twenty per cent said that their parish attendance had declined. Two thirds of all the parishes for which I have statistics (twenty-four) have fewer than fifty people regularly involved (one-third have fewer than twenty-five people). Fifteen percent (four churches) see between fifty and one hundred people involved, while four churches have between one hundred and seventy and three hundred people involved regularly. So there is a wide range of size in the Network parishes. The

vast majority of these churches are made up of people that are at least fifty-one years old. Four churches had a predominance of younger people, two with the seventeen to thirty age group, and two with the thirty-one to fifty age group. Close to eighty per cent of all of these churches have people with at least a college education, while five have members with predominantly a high school education. One church had a majority of university grad level members. The currently available statistics for Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) in the Network state that there are seventy-two parishes or plants, with an average total of 4500 ASA, which works out to 62.5 ASA per church. As my questionnaire shows, the majority of churches fall below this number of ASA. St. Chad's own attendance has been relatively unchanged, with a few people moving away, and a few new people coming, and the addition of a significant weekday group of Anglicans worshipping in a local seniors' residence. The biggest percentage growth in the Network seems to have been in the number of clergy who have joined. With seventy parishes/plants, there are now about one hundred and eighty clergy, and six bishops. A significant number of clergy are honorary assistants, and some are associates. A few parishes have their own buildings, but the great majority rent in their location. In comparison, there are no current statistics for the Anglican Church in Canada, the last report being issued in 2001, with about 162,000 ASA, and a little over 2800 congregations, for just under 60 ASA per congregation. Of course, this figure in 2001 was before churches and individuals became part of the Anglican Coalition in Canada and the Network. It would be fair to say that the activity of not just planting, but multiplying, churches is not in evidence in any Anglican churches in Canada when the

survey was done in 2013, and that new convert growth in ANiC churches is not yet occurring widely.

I also did not see, as of 2013, any comprehensive plan for ongoing discipleship in Anglican churches, although the vision is beginning to be expressed. The foundations need to be rebuilt, if we are to see spiritual and numerical growth in Anglican expressions of the Christian faith. The Rule of Life is part of that foundation.

Rectors and Discipleship

The ten questions that I asked Network rectors to answer in Part I of my questionnaire were intended to get a better picture of my basic question regarding growth: did Network parishes have a developed plan for discipleship that would initiate and sustain the Anglican Christian's personal habit of discipleship (following Jesus)? Were they set up to be parishes in which disciples were built up, and where disciples then made disciples? So I asked how important the development of discipleship was for these rectors or church planters. Everyone replied. Almost all said it was 'very important,' or 'important.' Only one person said it was 'somewhat important.'

I wanted to see how these parishes saw discipleship developing day by day, and so I asked what the top three ways were that discipleship happened in their parishes. Everyone answered that question. The majority of replies named sermons, small group Bible studies, and one-on-one mentoring as the way they developed discipleship. Some used informal coffee and conversation meetings, Alpha groups and confirmation classes. Advent and Lenten courses, new members' classes, adult Sunday school, prayer walks,

book studies, and parish missions were rarely used as opportunities for discipleship to grow. There were two other answers written in by respondents, a weekly bulletin insert (Growing in Grace, and, Going Deeper) for people to read, and the running of a Christian 12 step recovery programme. Three replies included what they used for book studies: Just Walk Across the Room (Bill Hybels), The Case for Faith (Lee Strobel), First Christians (no author given), the Gospel and the Catholic Church (Archbishop Michael Ramsey), Discipleship Essentials (Greg Ogden). These authors are from a variety of denominations, including non-denominational evangelical (Hybels and Strobel), Church of England (Ramsey) and Presbyterian (Ogden). Three are American authors and one British.

So, in all of the above, we see a variety of ways that Network parishes are seeking to develop discipleship. Most often, the catalyst for discipleship seemed to be the rector who preaches weekly, and is encouraging discipleship among the members who come to the Sunday service. Is this how churches grow? As I consider the Rule of Life as a basis for discipleship development, I see each member being challenged regularly to follow Jesus in every area of life. In Toronto, following Jesus can cover a lot—politics, culture, education, commerce, health care, housing, and more. Poverty and crime are never far from the front pages of the daily news. There are many neighbourhoods in Toronto, and each has its own issues and concerns and personality. How do Anglican Christians in Toronto follow Jesus faithfully and courageously? How are they engaged with their society?

There was a general discontent among respondents with how little discipleship was actually occurring in the churches that were part of the questionnaire, with 70%

(seventeen churches) saying that improvement was needed. Six rectors thought that things were moving along satisfactorily. This included; one parish with a younger base of membership, which had been part of the Network for a year, and was growing; one parish of fewer than twenty-five members, who, in the three years they had been part of the Network, saw growth in attendance; one parish that had been in the Network for four years (as of 2013), that had between twenty-five and forty-nine members, and was growing; a parish of between fifty-one and ninety-nine people which had been in the Network about one year and was neither growing nor declining, whose rector did not see Anglican resources as being important for the education of the parish; one parish of one hundred and seventy members that had been formed over a hundred years ago, that had been in the Network since it formed, but whose membership was not growing and whose clergy leadership would prefer to look to the Network Canons for a framework for how members should live; and finally, one parish that had under twenty-five in regular attendance, whose membership had declined in the five years since it was in the Network. It would be difficult from the questionnaire to say what it was that was instrumental in the growth, stability or decline of these parishes, but the questionnaire did give a picture of how the rectors saw discipleship. There were conflicting responses to this general question, which when compared, made me uneasy about the direction in which some parishes were going. What I noticed most of all was a lack of clarity in understanding what discipleship means. This is not surprising, since as I have said elsewhere, the environment out of which many of these parishes have come has not emphasized what it means to follow Jesus. It was merely assumed. But times have changed. The current situation in which Network churches find themselves is different from other church

denominations. Other churches that have co-operated with society and followed its lead may have some concern about their existence, but they will find new ways in which to keep going in some form. Other ethnic churches who are trying to remain faithful to a biblical vision of life and who are made up of newcomers to Canada will draw their strength from their own cultural community. But Network churches are not for the most part ethnic churches. They are a healthy combination of recent immigrants and those whose roots have been in Canada for a long time. But mostly, their composition is more like the Anglican churches that have decided to follow societal trends.

To live a different kind of life is difficult. It brings criticism. Such Christians have to deal with accusations of intolerance and taunts of being schismatic or old-fashioned. How does an Anglican Christian in the Anglican Network in Canada follow Jesus in such a setting? When he or she looks back to how it used to be, he or she is left with questions about how effective they were in their former church life, and may despair about how to be faithful when their accustomed environment has changed. As noted in the description of the composition of the Network churches, many of them are predominantly made up of older members, and the older the church member, the more they may despair, because they have lived through a time of great change. The question of how to follow Jesus is even more immediate for those who are younger, since they are being brought up in an education system that has been developing a different way of forming lives that does not value the Christian worldview. How are younger Anglican Christians to follow Jesus faithfully and with a full understanding of biblical truth?

In the questionnaire responses, slightly more respondents (fourteen) felt that Anglican resources for developing discipleship were 'unimportant' or just 'somewhat

important' (ten people considered Anglican resources to be 'important'). This was interesting, since the next question I asked was how many of the rectors had used the Rule of Life from the Canadian Book of Common Prayer as a pattern for teaching discipleship. Eleven had done so, and thirteen had not. I did not ask in the questionnaire what the history of the rectors had been. Since the introduction of the Book of Alternative Services (BAS) in 1985 (although draft liturgies had been tested earlier than that by parishes), many Anglican churches in Canada ceased or decreased their use of the Book of Common Prayer. Certainly this was the case when I was serving in Newfoundland, where that parish had been among the first to adopt the BAS. So, given that, it may not be surprising that today's Network church leaders are not aware of the Rule of Life. Also, some clergy, like myself, come from other church traditions. In the Anglican Church of Canada, the role of confirmation itself was at the same time undergoing discussion, with greater emphasis being put on a programme of first communion for younger children, and less emphasis being put on confirmation at age twelve. So in those Canadian churches that used new liturgies, the significance of confirmation changed, and the Rule of Life was not part of the education of children and youth. The new emphasis was on the baptismal covenant, interpreted often to emphasize justice issues.

It was interesting to see the opinions of those who had used or were aware of the Rule of Life, regarding its ability to produce measurable results in discipleship among church members. No one thought they had seen 'very favourable' results; four had seen 'favourable' results; four had seen 'somewhat favourable' response; and two had seen 'negligible' results. This may point to the need for some development of training among church leaders, to be able to present the Rule of Life in a way that is understood by

church members. It is unlikely that there would have been any clergy education in the theological institutions that would have included this. In the school I attended, confirmation was downplayed, and thought of as a rite looking for a theology. There is no evidence of any serious attempt to explain the Rule of Life or to help people to come to decisions about their own spiritual growth. The Book of Common Prayer assumes a pattern of faith, beginning with God's grace in salvation and then the Holy Spirit's sanctification of the Christian. The Rule of Life is like an action plan pattern, to help Anglican Christians who have confessed Jesus as Lord to explore all parts of their life, in the context of the believing congregation. It looks towards bringing people from a young faith to a mature faith, so that their greatest dependency is upon God. I think its use has a lot of value in building faithful biblical foundations for our new Network congregations.

One question in my survey asked leaders what they considered important areas that should be part of the development of discipleship, since they might be expected to be concerned about discipleship even if they did not know or use the Rule of Life. There were nine areas listed, all of which I listed because I consider them to be elements derived from the Rule of Life. Everyone responded to this question. There were three areas that topped the list, with 91.7% saying they were important: daily Bible reading, regular attendance in worship, and growth in Christ-likeness, and 87.5% agreeing that daily prayer was important. Slightly fewer (about 75%) thought personal evangelism, regular financial giving to the church, regular attendance at Holy Communion and using one's gifts for the building up of the church were important areas. The least frequently considered important were community service (that is, being a community volunteer) and regular giving to missions, at 58% and 66% respectively. Three people considered all of

the elements to be important. One person agreed that all elements were important, but would further add small group participation/mentoring. One person wanted to specify tithing and fasting, and another, regular spiritually relevant reading (in addition to the Bible). I think the answers to this question provide a good picture of how spiritual development in the Network parishes is happening and how it is viewed. What is important to Network leaders will then be imparted to the congregations. While just over one-third of Network rectors replied to the questionnaire, that number is sufficient to give a fair representation of what all Network parishes and plants are experiencing.

Twenty-one of twenty-four respondents answered the next question, on whether or not, after reading the Rule of Life on p. 555 in the BCP, they considered that it provided an adequate framework for developing and maintaining discipleship in their parish or church plant. The question asked respondents to “read the Rule of Life (p. 555, BCP, 1962) and indicate whether or not you think that it provides an adequate framework for developing and maintaining discipleship in your parish/plant.”

This question immediately followed the previous one, about what people considered important areas of discipleship. I wanted to see if the respondents could see the co-relation between what they considered important for discipleship, and the value of the Rule of Life, which I consider to be like a summary statement on which Anglican Christians may build a balanced view of discipleship, one that acknowledges one’s relationship to God through Christ, to the local congregation, and to the world around them, both closer and farther away. Here are some of the answers to that question that support the use of the Rule of Life:

Yes (three people gave this answer)

Yes, I feel that it provides a very good framework, from which specific elements of the rule can be developed and made very relevant according to a specific cultural context.

It provides a good framework that we should all try to adhere to.

Yes, it is very relevant and speaks well to being a disciple of Christ. It can be a framework and I regret I have not given it enough thought.

Yes, I think this provides an adequate framework. Good to be reminded that the Anglican Way has good solid roots in Scripture and isn't as superficial as the liberal wing is trying to make it.

Yes, this is an adequate framework for the development and maintenance of discipleship in my project. One of the stumbling blocks in the previous churches that we came from is that the Rule of Life was not discussed which leaves the church today to re-introduce this part of the Catechism.

I believe it is a very adequate framework, keeping in mind that it is predicated on knowing the 'precepts of the Gospel and the faith and order of the church.'

So, almost half of those who replied considered the Rule of Life to be an adequate framework.

The other replies, for the most part, also agreed that the framework was good, but added cautions against incorrect use. Here are some examples of the cautions:

Yes, with teaching and mentoring.

The framework is adequate but not exhaustive. The language is archaic.

It does provide a good starting point, but will probably need elaboration.

I believe the ANiC Canons have an improvement that includes justice, etc.

Very adequate. However, along the side of other study and reading material.

Yes, but it needs to be translated into modern English and numbered as action items.

As a framework it is quite adequate but lacks specifics in our specific responsibility to imitate Christ.

Yes, it is a good framework if your intention is to equip church members, already committed to Christ, but more emphasis should be placed on personal growth in evangelism to bring unchurched to Christ and to church for discipling.

Even though I like the various ‘action items’ in the RULE OF LIFE, it’s possible that people could fall into the trap of believing that fulfilling all these ‘duties’ will make them a better Christian OR gain points with God. What I find missing in the RULE OF LIFE is a statement indicating that keeping Jesus as the focus of our lives...at the centre of our lives...ensuring He is Lord over every aspect of our lives...that we commit to spending time with Him and getting to know Him more is of utmost importance. In fact, it should be the prerequisite to all that is listed. Everything in the RULE OF LIFE should ‘flow out of’ our relationship with Jesus Christ. I believe this needs to be more clearly stated.

It does describe most key practices. I believe it is a recent compilation, and does not go back to 1662 or 1552 – but I may be wrong on this. It is ‘churchy.’ I think it needs to say ‘weekly’ church attendance in place of ‘regular.’ It needs to discuss spiritual gifts. It needs to talk about developing a Christian worldview. It needs to address the need for Christians to have at least one significant connection with other Christians each week. It needs to put service to Christ higher than social service to the community. It needs to emphasize our need for ‘Christ-likeness’ rather than just Christ’s example. It needs to refer more to Jesus. It needs to de-emphasize ‘church’ and emphasize serving Jesus. It needs to emphasize serving and doing to bring God glory.

So, again, around the same number of people would find some agreement with the Rule of Life but would alter it, either by adding points, by making the existing points more specific, or by translating it into more modern language.

The replies to this question are valuable as I develop teaching in discipleship in the parish. They bring out the positive elements of the Rule of Life and also show some of the problems that might arise in using and developing the Rule of Life. Most respondents were quite engaged in the discussion of the Rule of Life and had given thought to what discipleship should look like. Some showed in their answers that they did not know the context of the Rule of Life within the BCP very well, or its history, while some perhaps did not appreciate the idea of ‘framework’ being a bare outline on which to hang specific aspects of discipleship. The previous question’s attempt (Question 8) to see how respondents viewed the ‘all round’ nature of discipleship, where all aspects of a person’s life should be in balance (under the lordship of Christ) somewhat informs the

way in which people then responded to this question (Question 9). Historically, churches that have emphasized personal salvation have often stayed away from social issues, and vice versa. The Rule of Life looks to provide a balance.

The final question of Part One was one that respondents were asked to answer in their own words. This was the central question, to see how Network leaders viewed discipleship. It is an important question, because it shows how Network leaders will seek to lead their congregations in discipleship. All of the questions in the survey were anonymous and voluntary, and, as with the previous question, three respondents chose not to answer. So the results are based on twenty-one replies. This question asked specifically for the parish/plant's definition of discipleship, in order to see if their parish or plant had formulated a congregational definition that the whole parish or plant would then be learning. In 2013, and even more so now, in 2016, there are many definitions of 'discipleship' to be found in books and online. In the answers given on the questionnaire, some showed that they had not yet as a group defined the word 'discipleship', but were intending to do so. Some answers were given from the viewpoint solely of the church's leader, and did not refer to a congregational definition. Most, but not all, mentioned Jesus Christ in their reply. Some gave answers that were brief, while others expanded on the topic.

Here are the answers, beginning with the shortest:

Following Jesus.

To seek, serve, and follow Christ.

To follow the command to 'GO'.

Spiritual maturity shown in a way of life.

Intentional growing in Christlikeness, together.

Growing closer to and more like Jesus individually and as a body.

Discipleship means for us to become more Christlike in our daily lives.

To follow Christ unconditionally and to share His good news with others in both word and action.

Being a student learning about Jesus. To take seriously what he taught and to live by his commands.

To share in Christ's newness of life so that his love overflows in our hearts, homes and communities.

It is walking in the fellowship of God's love made known in Jesus and then inviting our neighbours into that fellowship.

Our church defines discipleship as Teaching believers to love as Jesus loved, serve as Jesus served, give as Jesus gave.

Discipleship involves dying to oneself, letting Christ be formed in us and seeking to serve Christ at all times and in all places.

First, become a Christian. Discipleship follows conversion. Discipleship is becoming more like Jesus in thought, word and deed in our 24/7 life.

Discipleship means living a disciplined Christian life. Page 555 outlines what a disciple should carefully consider in developing his/her Rule of Life.

We rely on the Holy Scriptures and the Apostolic Tradition of the church catholic. We do not rely upon everyone's individual or even group-advocated definition of discipleship.

Discipleship means to grow in personal Christlikeness day by day through the use of accepted spiritual disciplines and thereby contributing to the growth in Christlikeness of the parish that will in turn impact for Christ the surrounding community and beyond.

Our church's purpose statement is "Through the power of the Holy Spirit we are a teaching and discipling community who love Jesus and His gospel." We haven't yet, even though we are planning to do so, defined what 'discipleship' or 'discipling' means for our parish.

Our definition of a disciple of Christ is a 'person who conscientiously, as their life project, walks with him, learns from him, worships him and the Father through him, maintains obedience to him, conforming themselves to his recorded attitudes and example up to the limit of the Holy Spirit's enabling.' – Packer and Parret, *Grounded in the Gospel*, Baker 2010, p. 14.

My personal definition of discipleship is based on Matthew 28: 19, and modelled after Jesus' equipping His disciples to lead others to Himself – from unbeliever to

believer, to church member, to maturity in the faith, to equip for ministry according to their gift and ultimately to be on a mission as disciple-makers themselves to grow the Kingdom for Christ. This is my motivation as pastor for our members. I do not feel adequate to do this but am attempting to model it.

To follow the Great Commission of Matthew 28: 19-20 is the only definition. However, this has been neglected over the years and again has to be re-introduced to the community. For example: about 50 years ago in a small village (the one I grew up in) one could freely talk about the love of God and give thanks to God for what he has done. All the children were baptized and all the families in the community attended church and took part in church activities. Modernity seems to have taken hold and people have strayed so it is more difficult to stay persistent and consistent in the following of Matthew 28: 19-20. It appears churches have fallen into the Great Omission and have neglected to teach the truth because they want everyone to feel included.

For this one question on the definition of discipleship, there really was a broad range of answers and interests that would bear further study at a diocesan level, perhaps through a synod workshop and keynote speaker.

Retreat

Around the same time that I began work on the questionnaire and was receiving replies, an opportunity came to plan a silent retreat for Network clergy in the southern Ontario area. The idea began for me after our (now retired) bishop, the Right Reverend Donald Harvey, had spoken to clergy, reminiscing about what he had enjoyed in his time of being Moderator Bishop of the Network. He regretted that many clergy were not able to go on retreat, something that he had done all during his ministry. As I thought of that, I recalled a retreat that I had attended in Bishop Harvey's home province of Newfoundland, and how it had been helpful to me in a ministry there that was quite demanding. I knew that some dioceses were still offering retreats for their clergy, but as the Network was so new, the only retreat being offered was on the other side of the

country, and difficult for eastern clergy to have the time and money to attend. At the same time, I was looking at the Rule of Life and its picture of balanced discipleship, and knew from my own experience that it can be hard for clergy themselves to achieve a balance while re-starting their ministries in a new setting (ANiC). So after discussion with colleagues and our bishops, it was decided that I might go ahead and plan a retreat. Bishop Harvey's experience with leading retreats was invaluable. For my part, I wanted to model a retreat that would show the benefit of regular prayer and Bible reading, and meeting together (two of the six points of the Rule of Life). This is what Bishop Harvey's retreat outline achieved. I knew that there would be a benefit in being together with other believers to do some of the kinds of things that Acts 2: 42-27 mention that the early church did (met together, listened to the apostolic teaching, held prayers, and Holy Communion, ate together, had times of praise). I wanted to do it in a simple way, to show how these habits are not complicated, nor do they have to involve a lot of resources that some North American church leaders have come to think are necessary if churches are to grow spiritually. So the retreat was done with few 'things.' We had prayer books, hymn books, a guitar, the basics that we needed for celebrating Holy Communion, a bishop to present talks, a pattern of daily prayer, and meals together in silence, with background music. What we did not have was personal communication devices, which were left out in our automobiles, or at home. A Silent Retreat Bulletin Schedule may be found in Appendix D. We met at a Coptic retreat centre that had originally been a Roman Catholic monastery, so the rooms were basic and set up for single occupancy. The scenery north of Toronto was magnificent, located on a high hill in the countryside. There were many places to walk and places to sit. The retreat centre staff appreciated our aims and worked

hard to serve everyone. The cost was very low, and so Network clergy, many of whom were underpaid or not paid for their ministry, were able to attend. The retreat has now been held for two years, and plans are underway to hold it in the spring of 2016. Following each retreat, I contacted those who attended and got feedback that would help in the planning of future retreats. Except for those with emergency family matters to handle, most who came the first year returned the second year. Participants appreciated the location, cost, structure and the ‘unplugged’ nature of the retreat, which allowed for quiet contemplation of the Bible teaching that was offered. The first retreat had ten clergy attending, the second, twenty. Because the location thus became known, there have since been other Network functions held there, and also individuals going there for personal retreat. The silent retreat’s success indicates that there are times when it may be more productive to model an idea (the Rule of Life) for colleagues than just to talk about it with them. So I see the continuation of this yearly retreat as beneficial for the clergy themselves, and ultimately, their congregations. I also see that I may want to add something of this nature in the way I am introducing the Rule of Life to my own congregation. One church leader has already indicated an active interest.

Growth Groups

In the fall of 2012, having begun the Doctor of Ministry the previous January, I was examining how St. Chad’s existing small groups might be developed so that they would not only be times for members to meet during the week for Bible study and support, but also model a well-rounded life that would include and encourage all of the

topics found in the Rule of Life. Since my arrival at the church in 2001, St. Chad's had always had some kind of small group structure, and this had continued in 2008 in our new affiliation with the Network. But the challenge always remained about how to relate the small groups to the work of the church and its missionary growth. This challenge was present because Anglican churches that had small groups in the latter part of the twentieth century generally did not see them as action groups. There were exceptions. For example, a Little Trinity small group in the late 1970's combined with another small group to sponsor some Vietnamese refugees, a project that lasted about three years. The groups not only helped the Vietnamese family settle, but continued to meet weekly for Bible study, and so, combined spiritual growth with outreach. But often, social or evangelistic outreach, when done in churches, happened apart from the small group structures.

Consequently, I made it known that St. Chad's would soon be starting home groups, one by one, in various locations. During the autumn there were various opportunities to talk about this with members, some of whom were already attending a small group. I indicated that I intended to restructure the small groups, so that some changes might occur. However, it would be done in consultation with the group leaders. The intended changes would be done for a number of reasons that came out of my observations of the existing small groups. One thing I had to make clear was that home groups were not just Bible studies, or discussions, or Alpha, or prayer meetings, such groups having been formats for which St. Chad's members had experience. I explained that

Home groups are small gatherings of people (and three is big enough!) who meet in homes. They meet on a regular basis, either weekly, or every other week. People in home groups make every effort to be there regularly. It is a commitment of their time, to one another, and to God.

Home groups, while not classified as Bible study groups, do read the Bible and discuss it. They do pray specifically about their own needs and the needs of others. When they meet, they worship the Lord, and they may also sit and have tea together. They share their cares and concerns. They challenge one another to follow Jesus.

As I asked people to think about home groups, I gave them a one-page handout that included Acts 2: 42-47 written out in point form, to emphasize the complete picture that was given there of what Christians look like when they follow Jesus.

Acts 2: 42-47 The Fellowship of the Believers

- ⁴² And they devoted themselves to
- the apostles' teaching
- and the fellowship,
- to the breaking of bread
- and the prayers.
- ⁴³ And awe came upon every soul,
- and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.
- ⁴⁴ And all who believed were together
- and had all things in common.
- ⁴⁵ And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.
- ⁴⁶ And day by day, attending the temple together
- and breaking bread in their homes,
- they received their food with glad and generous hearts,
- ⁴⁷ praising God
- and having favor with all the people.
- And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

I then commented:

As you can see from the above verses, there are many activities that tell us what it means to be the church. Think about what that looks like, as we meet in our home groups week by week, and also when we all meet together on Sundays.

When you are reading each phrase, it is helpful to ask yourself: What does it say? What does it mean? What does it mean to me? What does it mean to us?

These questions are ones that I have found effective in helping a group or individual to understand what a Bible passage means. The first three questions I have used with groups for a long time, but the last one (What does it mean to us?) was added (in consultation

with my own group) to bring in the communal aspect of our life together as the church.

Then I concluded with the following:

And also think about the following (Rule of Life, Book of Common Prayer, p. 555):

Every Christian man or woman should from time to time frame for himself a RULE OF LIFE in accordance with the precepts of the Gospel and the faith and order of the Church; wherein he may consider the following:

The regularity of his attendance at public worship and especially at the holy Communion.

The practice of private prayer, Bible-reading, and self-discipline.

Bringing the teaching and example of Christ into his everyday life.

The boldness of his spoken witness to his faith in Christ.

His personal service to the Church and the community.

The offering of money according to his means for the support of the work of the Church at home and overseas.

Can you see how the Rule of Life shares similarities with Acts 2: 42-47?

This introduction to home groups was given to all members of the congregation. I spent the fall preparing people for the planned introduction of the newly formed groups to happen in January 2013. Those who were already in groups looked at these questions together, while those not in groups were encouraged to consider them on their own. Incorporating the Rule of Life into the Home Groups is an ongoing process that I think will never end. My background is as a stay-at-home mother of four children, whose growth together as a family was, and is, a constant but enjoyable challenge. Again and again, as a parent, I might think that I had everything in order so that our household could run smoothly and the children could take responsibility that was appropriate for their ages (a ten year age span from first to last child). And then, suddenly, the way we were doing things did not work very well. We were forced to sit down together around the kitchen table and see how we could adjust things so that we were all working together. New plans

would be made, and old ones adjusted for the new reality. If I wished that things could return to normal, I was faced with the reality that what we were currently facing in this constant change was, in fact, the ‘normal’ for us. And I think the same is true for the local congregation. We have a pattern and we have a goal that is put before us by God in the scriptures, but over and over again, we have to review where we are, and see if we are still on the right path.

Sermons

In 2013 at St. Chad’s the sermon series during Lent dealt with the six topics of the Rule of Life, beginning on Ash Wednesday, February 13, and continuing every Sunday through to Palm Sunday, where the sermon looked at Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem as its King, and challenged us to see that having Jesus as our King involved giving ourselves to him, and then out of grateful hearts, offering what he has given us, for his service. In all of these services, the bulletin included the Rule of Life on an insert, so that people could think about their own personal Rule of Life. I encouraged members to write out their own Rule of Life, or reflect on one they might already have composed. A variety of Scripture passages were opened up (some, from the regular lectionary readings, which we always read weekly, and others, as they applied to the topic that was being addressed).

The following year (2014), starting Sunday, January 5, I again began a six week sermon series on the Rule of Life, while at the same time emphasizing the home groups and their outreach ministries, and the opportunity for people to join a group or form a new one. The sermons again went through the six points of the Rule of Life, pointing out

ways in which the scriptures were describing a fully-rounded discipleship. Instead of using a bulletin insert, I had people open up their Prayer Book to p. 555, so they could see the Rule of Life as the sermon was being preached. There are different ways that people learn new habits, and one of them is to become familiar with the BCP so that they can feel confident in using it. If someone might think of the way children are brought up, one can see so many different ways in which a way of life is set forth in the family context. As Christian parents, and also as clergy who are entrusted with part of God's family, we have a great variety of resources that are simple to use, and reinforce our goal of presenting everyone mature in Christ. Epiphany in the church's cycle is a good time to see who Jesus is, and what it means to follow him. So that season tied in well with the six points of the Rule of Life.

Again, in January and part of February 2015 I highlighted the Rule of Life as we went through the Epiphany readings for that year. It might be asked whether or not this is a valid use of the Scripture readings. In my preaching I generally use the readings for the day (or usually, one reading, with reference to any of the other readings that might reinforce the reading chosen) or I occasionally do a Bible book series. I have found that the nature of the six topics in the Rule of Life are so basic to the topic of being a follower of Jesus that our scriptures always present that challenge in some way or other. And they always relate it in some way to the great gift that God gives us in Jesus' sacrifice for us, so that there never need be a time when these topics are presented as a 'to do' list for gaining God's favour, but a 'to be' list that describes who we are as members of Jesus' body, the church. As 'Exploring Discipleship' puts it, we are to 'work out' our salvation, not 'work at' our salvation. This is just another way that I see the wisdom of the person

who formulated the Rule of Life, so that it meshes with the theology of the Book of Common Prayer, and is fully based on faithfulness to God's Word. The process itself is built into the church's year, and the growth will come the way it does in our families, slowly but steadily. We may not see growth on any particular day because we are looking at the same people day after day, and perhaps nothing much seems to be changing. But if we reflect on our own lives, once a year, on where we are in implementing our own personal Rule of Life, we may be better able to see the ways in which God has been nurturing us and growing our faith. We need to provide times in our corporate life as a church when we reflect on that. A yearly series on the Rule of Life is one way to do that.

Parish Booklet

Another resource that I have been developing is a parish booklet, entitled *Growing in Faith: Developing a personal Rule of Life*. As the various ways to introduce the Rule of Life develop in the parish, it seems good to have a short resource that members can read at any time during the year, to refresh their memory on how to live a balanced Christian life as an Anglican disciple of Jesus. Often it is more helpful for such a booklet to be introduced after the various other ways of introducing the topic have taken hold (just as hearing and doing, in childhood growth, come before reading). Certainly I have found that to be true of other aspects of church development. For example, when we moved to our current location, we were looking at ways to help visitors feel comfortable coming into our services. We recognized that our Anglican liturgy might be unfamiliar to those who visit us, either because they have not been in an

Anglican service before, or perhaps because they have been using another form of liturgy. We currently use the Book of Common Prayer (Canada, 1962) and a new trial liturgy produced by Canon Dr. J.I. Packer and Canon David Short in Vancouver (St. John's, Vancouver). So a short booklet was put together to describe to people what happens in our Sunday service. Copies of these booklets are always available at the rear of the church space, and the wardens will offer them to those who are new with us. We are also in an area of the city where people may just want to come in through the door to see the worship space, but not stay. We give them this booklet too, if they indicate any interest. The third way we use the booklet is to have it on our website, stchads.ca, so that any who look us up can tell in advance who we are and what we do. The production of this booklet came as the church leaders discussed how we might better serve those who might be thinking of visiting or attending.

Likewise, the booklet about the Rule of Life is coming out of the need we see to keep before people a picture of who we are, who we want to be, and how we may reflect as Jesus' followers about how to live every day. We also see this booklet as being helpful to inform our life together. Because it will be given to each church member, available on our information table each Sunday, and listed on our website, it will be kept before people's eyes on a regular basis. I am hoping that it will promote the sustainability of a balanced discipleship more so than sporadic courses would do. It will also be available whenever anyone does a confirmation course, as a supplement to the course (this in fact is the way in which the Rule of Life in the BCP was originally used).

At this time of writing, I have not yet completed the parish booklet. Its proposed shape is this:

Introduction

11. Rule of Life examples in history
12. Value of a personal Rule of Life
13. Being part of the worshipping community
14. Developing a life of prayer, Bible-reading and self-discipline
15. Following the commands of Christ
16. Witnessing to my faith in Christ
17. Serving in the parish and in my local community
18. Supporting the work of the church locally and globally
19. How to write a personal Rule of Life
20. Bibliography

The other booklet which I mentioned above, that the parish uses for helping people understand the liturgy is a small twelve-page booklet of about two thousand words. It was completed earlier in 2015. It is short enough so that it does not overwhelm the reader. The layout of that booklet has clear headings, so that the reader can look up the various parts of the service, which have red letter headings. The proposed new booklet on the Rule of Life will be comparable in format, but it will be longer. Each section will be biblically based and include practical information that applies to our situation.

The liturgy booklet was initially introduced to the congregation at the Sunday service and then distributed to everyone. This is generally a good way for St. Chad's parish to receive such a resource. Those who are not present at that time picked up the booklet when they did come. Given the size of our parish, it is within the leaders' ability to follow up on what people think of the booklet by speaking over the following weeks to individuals. This allows for further conversation and ministry opportunities, and reveals any questions that need to be clarified. In the past I have also introduced new courses or ministry guidelines after the Sunday service, during our regular coffee hour. This has been a good way of ensuring that the maximum number of people will be present to learn. Because the parish gathers people from all over the city and beyond, it is difficult to have any general meetings on other days. The way our coffee hour is done makes

sharing information fairly easy. After the service, everyone gets their plate of nibbles and their drink, and sits at tables for conversation. The room is compact enough that a presentation can be done, and it also allow for questions and conversation around the topic at each table. When the Rule of Life booklet is distributed and explained, people will be able to take it home and have the opportunity to use it to reframe their own personal Rule of Life. While questionnaires may be helpful to gain information about such a booklet's effectiveness, I think that in the case of St. Chad's parish, it would be more useful just to contact members individually in the ensuing weeks to see what they think of the booklet. In the past, when I have wanted feedback, this has worked well. In other settings, a more formal, structured approach might be needed. I usually also do ask for written comments, and sometimes one or two people will take the time to write down their thoughts. Other parishes might do evaluation differently, because of the makeup of their parish. Some parishes might appreciate a questionnaire. St. Chad's has used a couple of questionnaires in the past and it has been challenging for some to participate in it. One other option that I can use is to involve the house groups with evaluation. Not everyone is part of a house group, though, or would stay for coffee hour, so, practically speaking, I will have to use a combination of coffee hour feedback, house group feedback and individual conversation.

One other example of a Rule of Life booklet that came to my attention as I researched material on the Rule of Life is a booklet that was written for the Anglican Church in Canada's Diocese of Fredericton (in the Anglican Church of Canada). This may be found on the Devotional Resources page of their website. This diocese had been one of the more conservative in Canada, and the person writing the booklet had come to

Canada from England and was also connected to the Church Army, which educates lay leaders for evangelism. The author of this booklet, the Rev. Chris McMullen, was recently (2014) elected bishop of the diocese. In 2011 he was part of a newly appointed Spiritual Development Team that was put in place to encourage Anglican Christians in the time leading up to their General Synod of 2013. They looked at the idea of meetings, workshops and programs, and decided that instead, what was needed was ‘a way to encourage Anglicans to each review and renew our personal daily discipleship, with an eye to being ever more faithful to Christ and his Way as we receive his grace, worship his Father and grow in his Spirit’ (McMullen 2012, 3).

The booklet was distributed at the end of 2012. The format was a series of six topics on the Rule of Life providing six weeks of daily readings and reflections. So, each week, from Monday to Friday, those participating would read a one page study on the topic for that week. It included a reference to a scripture passage, a reflection on the topic and the scripture passage, and then, to conclude, a written prayer. It is still included in the diocesan website under the category of spiritual growth programmes. However, I was unable to find any online evaluation of the booklet to know how much it is being used in the parishes. It would be interesting to find out, since this booklet was provided as a resource as part of a top-down approach to the development of spiritual growth (from diocese to parishes), whereas the booklet that I am proposing comes out of a parish that has already begun to investigate the Rule of Life in various ways over the past two years. It will come out of what has already been developed, and is able to be added to and altered as we find out what is helpful and practical for the parish.

My initial interest in how to use the Rule of Life within the parish has developed over the past few years. The methods I have used to introduce various aspects of the Rule of Life within the parish have persuaded me even more that such a traditional way of using the resources that Anglicans already have as our heritage, in the Book of Common Prayer, are beneficial to the development of personal and congregational growth in faith, using that Rule as a template for balanced discipleship that has the ability to produce sustained spiritual growth for every member of the parish, for the gathered congregation, and for the renewal of biblical Anglican Christianity in Canada.

CHAPTER FIVE

IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES

Introduction

It is clear that if the Anglican Network in Canada parish of St. Chad's in Toronto is to grow, it has to be strong spiritually. It has to be like the church of Philadelphia in Revelation:

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:

These are the words of the holy one, the true one,
who has the key of David,
who opens and no one will shut,
who shuts and no one opens:

“I know your works. Look, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but are lying—I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you. Because you have kept my word of patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth. I am coming soon; hold fast to what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. If you conquer, I will make you a pillar in the temple of my God; you will never go out of it. I will write on you the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem that comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches” (Revelation 3: 7-13 [NRSV]).

The church in Philadelphia had little power in its location. This did not discourage it from persevering. It could see the possibilities for ministry in its location. It did what Jesus said, which is a basic mark of discipleship. Its future in God's eyes if it continued to stand firm was to enable God's presence to be known, and to do well. The combination of

keeping God's word and having a vision for gospel opportunities in one's community is the kind of balance through which the Rule of Life seeks to develop the kind of Anglican parish in which members are growing spiritually, and continually being challenged through hearing God's word to keep on following Jesus, no matter what barriers might discourage or try to divert them from their purpose.

I think that the Rule of Life, as written in the Canadian Book of Common Prayer, is a good idea for Canadian Anglican Christians to use as a framework for their own lives. It is a good way to help individual Anglican Christians grow in faith, but it also provides a framework for the parish as a whole to grow in faith. Even though I discovered the Rule of Life by chance, it came to me in a way that answered a lot of the questions I was having (and had been having for a long time) about how a Christian might grow in faith and mature in a healthy way. It answered the observation that I had, of Christians who seemed unable to progress beyond a roller-coaster of success and failure, with no ongoing, continuing resource that would stop the roller-coaster and offer good solid spiritual growth that would be lasting and deep.

In my calling as a presbyter in the Anglican Network in Canada (and before that, in the Anglican Church in Canada), I want to be able to provide a way for people who come to faith then to become faithful followers of Jesus every day and to be able to keep on growing in a healthy way to maturity in the Christian faith, especially in the biblical Anglican expression of that faith. I want to see them do this not in isolation, but in the context of the church that meets regularly, so that what is seen by others is a group that displays Jesus to the world, as Saviour and Lord.

I think that there are other resources that may be helpful for implementing the various topics of the Rule of Life in a parish setting, and also in the individual Anglican Christian's setting, but I think that the basic Rule of Life provides an unparalleled framework on which to build that growth. The Rule of Life is short enough to remember; it is general enough to apply in a variety of settings; it is complete enough to provide for a healthy balance that remembers how Jesus demands submission of our whole life to God, with no area left out of his control.

It seemed to me as I began to explore the idea of developing the Rule of Life as a resource for my parish that there was very little being written or done in this area. There were some excellent courses that had been proved effective as ways for followers of Jesus to go out into their communities and evangelize periodically, but did not provide continuing training for those followers. Ephesians 3 mentions that church leaders with various gifts are to prepare Christians in an ongoing way for the work of the ministry, and as Alan Hirsch has written in a number of excellent books, the church today is in need of recovering its spiritual DNA by encouraging all of these leaders (evangelists, prophets, apostles, pastors, and teachers) to provide a well-rounded training to help Jesus' followers be what he intends them to be. But, as an Anglican presbyter in the Anglican Network in Canada, I need to ask how I can do that in my situation, in an authentically Anglican way. Is it possible? Can one work within the structures that have been set up to provide guidance and growth for an entire developing Anglican diocese?

The development of the Rule of Life as a resource for spiritual growth of the Anglican Christian, in the context of the local congregation, seems to fit with that kind of ecclesiology.

Why the Rule of Life is Useful

The reason why the Rule of Life is central to my thinking about parish life and growth is because it provides a balanced way of implementing Jesus' command to make disciples. It is difficult to maintain balance. I have observed that imbalance in a number of contexts. I recall a church where the big emphasis was on developing a Sunday School. Every effort was put into making the Sunday school bigger and bigger. When it could grow no more from members' children or local neighbourhood children, the church bought a small bus, and developed a bus ministry to areas further away. It worked initially and there were many children who came regularly each Sunday for their classes, which were held for an hour before the church service. However, their families never came. To handle the increasing number of children, the leaders put all of their efforts into recruiting Sunday School teachers. It was a church where the Sunday School children would sit at the front with their teachers for the first part of the service, and then the younger ones would leave for their own programme. Unfortunately, those children whose parents attended never got to worship with them, as a family. More and more space was taken up with the children, and the teachers found it difficult to have them participate, because they were not used to being in a church service. There was little time or energy left over from this weekly production for other forms of Christian growth. Door-to-door visiting was ongoing every summer; but its principal purpose was to ask if the family had any children that they would like to be picked up by bus every Sunday morning, from about 9:30 to 12:30. Many parents saw the advantage of that, as a way of taking a break from their children, but it was not particularly effective evangelism. It left church members unable to see the broader picture of discipleship. Because they felt frustrated at

the unbalanced ministry that the church was developing, some talented, committed members left and planted another church. At that same time (but actually much too late) the church leaders contemplated some kind of building development to accommodate the larger numbers, but they could not come to any agreement, and the numbers continued to decline, and the bus ministry stopped. What may look like a solution to growth may indeed work for a while, but if the solution is flawed, the results will likely be counterproductive, similar to this church's experience.

Why is the Rule of Life different from other solutions to spiritual and numerical growth? It is different because it is not a programme but an ongoing resource guideline for achieving balanced Christian disciples, in the context of the Anglican Church. It is contained in the Anglican Prayer Book that is commended in the Network Canons (Network Canons 2014, 30). It shows, with its variety of subject matter, that following Jesus involves every part of our lives. It reminds believers that assurance of eternal life is not to be hoarded. The Great Commission is in force today. Jesus has not told his church to stop making disciples. Disciple-making is how the church grows, and faithful disciples are the catalyst for how this happens. It is short enough to remember, general enough to promote group conversation and individual thought, and comprehensive enough to include a wide range of ministries of both individual Anglican Christian and the entire congregation.

The Rule of Life applies to all Anglican Christian believers. It is not aimed at children, or teenagers, or young adults, or seniors, or working people, or single people, or empty-nesters, or families, or those confined to their homes or seniors' residences, or

students away at school. It is aimed at all Anglican Christians of any and every circumstance.

Many churches spend time to construct a vision statement. St. Chad's vision statement seeks to be biblical, Trinitarian, active and comprehensive: "Worshipping God, Trusting Jesus, Obeying the Holy Spirit." It was 'boiled down' from a fuller description of our vision statement, several pages long, formulated when the church was part of the diocese of Toronto (ACoC). It has been a means of helping us to focus on our mission. The addition of the Rule of Life to describe who we are, helps to articulate the areas of our lives in which we are living this vision. There is a need to elaborate on the above vision statement. That was difficult in the first few years of our new affiliation, as we and the Network were only beginning to develop the language to say who we are. In the case of the Network, much work went into this kind of diocesan development, and a communications director has been very busy producing written descriptions to show who the Network is. St. Chad's has benefited from the advice and assistance of both the Network communications director and graphic artist, but still, St. Chad's church leaders have had to discuss and pray and make decisions on how the parish will develop. This has provided a great opportunity for leaders to develop and work and pray together. Such development cannot be rushed. One image that keeps me going is the picture of a plant. There is a lot of wisdom in seeing a parish as a growing organism, that has a personality and future given to it by God, and which the members together nurture and of which they are essential parts. Plants that persevere in nature tend to grow slowly. They grow according to how God has created them. They have limiting size and so they expand further by seeding new plants. So should churches. The addition of the Rule of Life,

which is gradually being implemented in the parish, is one more way of building a good foundation (to take an illustration from construction), of husbanding a living creation of God (an illustration from agriculture). God himself has given us these pictures in the scriptures, to show how he is growing his people, and they apply today as St. Chad's church leaders carefully provide good foundations as they serve him.

When to Implement the Rule of Life

Some church projects have a beginning and an end. This may be true, for example, in a church that is planning a particular outreach strategy for the area in which they are located. Such projects can be described and evaluated from start to finish, to see if they work, to see if there was a reason why they did not work, and so on. However, the development and evaluation of the Rule of Life, presenting it to all Anglican Christians in our parish so that they can consider how they are progressing individually in their faith, and also so that the parish itself can evaluate its progress, is not such a simple process. The introduction and use of the Rule of Life structure (BCP, 555) is not such a project. It is a way of life, to be developed by habit into the essential life of each member and the parish as a whole. It is a defining statement. And like a family can identify mileposts in the growth of its children, but then spend each day simply developing rather undramatically the habits that the parents know will benefit their children as they grow, so too the parish and its leaders will spend most of their time just being faithful today to the way God leads. There will be times when assessment is done, but it is in living the habits that the growth occurs, and mostly, this happens quite imperceptibly.

The implementation of this Rule of Life has to begin with me, as the Rector. This seems like an obvious thing, but it bears stating. I can have a passionate desire to see solid Christian growth in the parish where I serve, and identify the spiritual needs of its members, but if I do not put myself under the rule of Christ in following him in all areas of my life, my ideas will be worthless.

As a small example of how I consider and frame for myself a Rule of Life based on the guidelines found in the BCP, I will give the following illustration. The Rule of Life says that I should periodically consider ‘the regularity of my attendance at public worship and especially at the holy communion.’ To spend time giving this some thought is challenging. I could just say that in my position, my attendance at public worship and especially the Holy Communion is satisfactory. I am there every week. What more can I do in that area as a follower of Jesus? Of course, that is where I start to think more deeply about it. What is going on within me as I prepare each Sunday? This leads to some searching of the thoughts and motives of my heart, and then in prayer to hear how God wants me to be as I get ready to go and be with the congregation and share God’s Word with them. It leads me to think about how worship is pictured in the scriptures and how our time together with other Christians is described. And under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, it brings repentance and change. It may be that once a year as I reflect on the Rule of Life, God will give me some particular word about an action or thought that needs to be changed or added, and then that becomes something that God works on in my life over the year ahead. But it cannot be limited to a once-a-year review. If the Rule of Life is there in the background as I go about the day, there will be opportunity in the small things for growth in faith. It will lead to better attitudes and behaviour. And

because the Rule of Life is a summary that occurs at the end of the confirmation teaching, all of that confirmation teaching undergirds what the Rule of Life says about my weekly attendance at worship and especially at the Holy Communion. And because the confirmation teaching itself is based on the Bible, which is God's message, it is the Bible that fundamentally supports how God is changing my life.

I may not be constantly telling others in the congregation how God is at work in my life, but I hope that the results will be seen. It is this doing of what God commands that then becomes the way of modelling the Rule of Life, even if the Rule of Life and its process are not being mentioned.

This 'buying in' to what it is I am trying to model is something that illustrates for church members that the Rule of Life is balanced for every part of life and for every time in life. When I fall down, even that becomes an opportunity to show how the human condition is sinfulness, but that God's desire is to forgive all who repent.

Where the Rule of Life is Applicable

The Rule of Life obviously describes every part of our lives as Anglican Christians. The transformation that occurs as we grow in faith affects our 'church' habits—gathering to worship weekly, being a regular communicant. It says something about our regular daily life of prayer—we are nourished daily through reading the scriptures and praying, in our own homes or apartments, when we are holiday, wherever we happen to be. We develop this habit of daily prayer and it becomes like other regular habits in our life. We eat and drink and move around and sleep every day because we are

alive; we pray and read the scriptures every day because we are spiritually alive. When either habit is interrupted, we know that something is not quite right, and we aim to get back to healthy living. We make daily decisions about all kinds of things; when we remember the Rule of Life, we relate those decisions to how we are to behave as followers of Jesus. We are with others in some capacity every day of our lives, either personally or through media. The Rule of Life commits us to use our words well, so that our words are always gospel words, in some way setting forth Jesus as the Saviour. Opportunities come up every day for us to promote the work of the church and the welfare of our communities. The Rule of Life wants us to love one another, because that is the way of Jesus. Lifestyle is a favourite topic in many settings, secular and religious. There are a variety of models put forward. Indeed, the Rule of Life historically at its beginning was part of a new kind of lifestyle, away from society and even in some cases from other believers, in order to regain a kind of life that was seen as being threatened by the world's way of living. The Rule of Life in the BCP does point out a Christian way of life that is practical and generous—a description of the kind of outgoing love that Jesus displays. It is engaged within the society, in the community of the church, and it involves everything that we possess. So in the Rule of Life, our money will be used not only for our own needs, but also ‘for the support of the work of the church at home and overseas.’ It will be given by us according to our means. The apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians to encourage them to give according to, and even beyond (that is sacrificially) their means, and then says, “for if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has—not according to what one does not have” (2 Corinthians 8: 12 [NRSV]). The Rule of Life does not let us decide to pick only one of its points to follow. That

would be an unbalanced way to read its purpose. The Rule of Life points to the beauty of Jesus, who showed us what it means to live a sinless life, the life for his creation that God desired when he first made them, and the life to which he draws us when the King returns.

So, the Rule of Life is not only connected to every aspect of our lives. It also points to the whole vision of what God is doing in his creation, and where all of history is headed.

For Whom the Rule of Life is Intended

The promotion of the Rule of Life that I have been describing is being developed for all believers who are at St. Chad's. My primary responsibility is, along with other presbyters, "to be messengers, watchmen, and stewards of the Lord; to teach and to premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family; to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his children who are in the midst of this sinful world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever (BCP 1962, 648-649). The Rule of Life falls into a particularly Anglican pattern, then, of preaching to, warning, building up, and caring for those who are in my congregation and those who are within the spheres of influence of the members and in the communities that we serve. At this time, it is hard to define a geographical sphere of influence, especially since we are not like some episcopally governed churches who still define parishes geographically. So opportunities and areas of influence tend to change. Creativity is therefore especially needed. But the Rule of Life is not governed by these seeming limitations, since it deals with people, individually and in

relationship. It is quite adaptable to our circumstances. So, therefore, I can commend it to the oldest and the youngest members of St. Chad's. I can commend it to members who have been growing spiritually, and those who are not. The topics of the Rule of Life become the introduction to a conversation, a departure point for building up one another in the faith.

Since it is part of the catechism teaching in the BCP, one might think that the Rule of Life is applicable only to those who are of an age to be confirmed, whether as teenagers or adults. However, I will share a personal story to show that it is not limited to such.

I grew up in a Presbyterian household. I went to church every Sunday. As a child, I sat through the four-times-yearly communion services. I learned how to pray before bed every night, and at school we prayed at the start of the day. I went to a variety of groups held at the church, one that was a missionary themed group, another, a community themed group that pledged allegiance to God, another, a group of youth that held services together. I learned the Ten Commandments, memorized scripture verses, memorized the Shorter Catechism, gave some money each week when Sunday School was held, and helped with the younger children. But when I became a Christian, through the invitation of a friend to a youth retreat, I experienced a series of thoughts about everything that had formerly been part of my religious upbringing. The first thing I wondered about was why the church had provided all of those things for me to do, and yet had not made the gospel clear. At first glance, those things were useless in my coming to faith. However, as I sought later to look more objectively at my upbringing, I saw that God had been at work in my life from the beginning. Even though I remembered little of anyone's saying

anything about a relationship with Jesus, the opportunities that I was given to read and learn his Word, and be part of a congregation, were preparation to make me receptive to salvation. In the same way, Anglican parents whose children have not yet been confirmed will be encouraged to develop habits in their children that will work towards their own personal confession of faith (as the baptismal promises for parents in the prayer book ask). It provides a good spiritual environment where children learn God's truth by their parents' example. To have such an attitude about one's religious upbringing allows one to be thankful for everything that God has done in bringing the person to faith, and it promotes and heals relationships.

A group of people that I also think may sometimes be left out of the church's ministry are the elderly, who are part of the church membership. Some live in their own homes and are able to be involved in the community, while others may live in a seniors' residence and have more limited ability to be involved in the life of the church. They too benefit from being challenged to have a Rule of Life, or to evaluate one that they already have. None of the points in the Rule of Life are irrelevant for Anglican Christians at any age. However, it may be a challenge to point out to them how they are already following Jesus in these areas, or how they can rethink their effectiveness in their present situation. Those in their senior years also need to grow in the faith, and their witness in that regard becomes a powerful testimony that can be shared with others in the church.

There may be other categories of members that might be marginalized, in terms of their need to reflect on the Rule of Life, and grow in their faith. In a small congregation it is easier to remember everyone, but in a larger congregation there is a danger that some may not be considered in the development of the Rule of Life. Perhaps the clergy

themselves, or the church's principal leaders, or members with disabilities, could be among those that, for one reason or another, are not challenged to grow in their faith. By making use of the Rule of Life as a parish resource for everyone, the result is that everyone serves and is served in ways that are suited to their situation.

How the Rule of Life May Be Presented

The most important way to develop the Rule of Life in the congregation is for the clergy and lay leaders to model it in their own lives. The Rule of Life as it is laid out in the Book of Common Prayer is a personal composition. It is recommended as an ongoing, yearly evaluation of one's confirmation. It begins after one has received teaching in the basics of the Christian faith and has appropriated for one's own God's salvation promise given through Jesus' sacrifice for us. There are various challenges involved in doing a personal review of the Rule of Life. One challenge is to see it as merely duty, another item to be checked off the list of what I have to do. Another is to procrastinate and think that I have to wait for a better time to do it. Still another challenge is to think that there is a best way of doing it, and be dissatisfied with whatever review I have attempted. Another challenge involves being realistic in my review and restatement of the Rule of Life for me in my current situation. Some may compose (either written or in their thoughts) a Rule that is so vague or incomplete that it cannot possibly be a guide to continued spiritual growth. Others may compose the ideal Rule of Life as they would like to see in their lives, but then framed it unrealistically so it is impossible to use as a guide. As the clergy and lay leaders responsible for a congregation's growth and spiritual health,

our own well-constructed yearly or regular review of the Rule of Life for us personally, will do much to help the congregation learn how to frame their own personal Rule of Life. When we lead by example, we have stories to share that are real, and they can be helpful for others to understand that following Jesus is not something that leaders do without their own struggle or hard work. Leaders are not on some special plateau where everything is easy and holiness is a given. It is surprising how many members in a congregation will think that. Leaders who are not growing spiritually may be comfortable with letting their congregation think that, but leaders that wish to serve the spiritual growth of their Anglican congregation will take Jesus' teaching to heart first of all for themselves, and know what it means in their own lives to follow Jesus as his disciple.

In the congregation of St. Chad's, there is the opportunity to be part of a home group, and in the home group, the opportunity to struggle together in reflecting on one's own personal Rule of Life. These home groups are set up with a meeting agenda that touches upon the six points of the Rule of Life. This happens because the groups are set up to model the picture of how the early Christians lived, as we see in the summary description of them in Acts 2: 42-47, and that summary includes all six points that are contained in the Rule of Life. In including the various actions found in that passage, groups will then be working out the six points of the Rule of Life in ways that meet the needs of their members and their ministry together, so it results in groups that do not look the same as each other. Each group will be reinforcing the individual Anglican Christian's personal Rule of Life, but also taking it to another level, where the Rule of Life then informs our parish life together. This is one reason why the home group structure is so valuable for the spiritual health of the parish. Currently (as of February

2016) twelve members (of twenty-four adult members in total) of St. Chad's are involved in home groups. Together, those home groups, which we have begun to call 'growth groups,' are involved in ministries through the week that reach about thirty people; many of whom have some familiarity with the Christian faith or are themselves Christians.

Another way in which the Rule of Life is brought to members' attention is through a yearly sermon series (described in chapter 4), usually at the beginning of the year. Other times when such a series may be profitable are during Lent and Advent. One of the things I have learned in various Anglican congregations is that each is unique in its pattern of 'best times,' even if each is adhering to the same Church Year calendar. Some congregations have a traditional pattern in the way they go through the year, while others are dealing with other contemporary rhythms of life that have to be taken into account in deciding how we are to be and grow together, always, of course, under God's guidance.

Anglican congregations differ widely in their reading habits. Here again, to offer a resource that will be used by the most people possible will involve understanding the way in which the congregation receives information. This is a challenge for me, as I grew up with a love of reading, and it is through books that I get a lot of information and enjoyment. But this may not be the way some others learn. A text book may be good for those who are in formal studies, but it may not interest others. So the idea of writing a booklet to help people develop their own Rule of Life needs corrective reinforcement, in ways that will be helpful, such as dialogue or even enactments. Even if it is brief, it will not reach everyone. But it will serve as an expanded summary of the original Rule of Life found in the Book of Common Prayer. I may discover that brevity in the booklet will be helpful beyond the booklet, since its brevity will allow for its more effective use on the

church website, and by including a list of other resources that further explore the Rule of Life from an Anglican Christian perspective (a short list at this time), those who enjoy reading can go into the topic more deeply. Just because books or booklets may not reach everyone is not a reason to omit them. They are necessary so that the foundation for the Rule of Life can stay on course. If there are no written guidelines, the experience of having and following a personal Rule of Life is more susceptible to going off the tracks. Conversely, without the experience of actually constructing one's own personal Rule of Life, one's beliefs may never see the light of day, in terms of living the Christian life. Both are important.

Results of Developing the Rule of Life

Is my focus on the Rule of Life having any results? What will come from an ongoing process of implementing the Rule of Life as a guide to personal faith and a resource for building up the congregation? Time will tell.

Many leaders whom I know, are longing for church renewal, revival and growth in our day. Messages, plans, conferences, retreats and books are addressing the topic, and the word 'discipleship' often appears in that context. The desire to see many people following Jesus as disciples is growing, but the results are seldom seen. It may be good to reflect in those times when we want God to bring revival that our desire may be driven by wanting God to do it all, when we ourselves are reluctant to be obedient to what he says. I think that over the history of the Christian Church, it is likely that the vast majority of believers come to faith, not during a revival, but through the steady, quiet operation of

God's Spirit. In my evangelical Anglican Christian context, I think that the Rule of Life will address the topic of Christian growth in a way that will provide good results. It will be results that perhaps are invisible to those who are looking for something dramatic, but results that will still be there, for those who see the value of slow, steady, maybe even mostly unremarkable growth.

I will give one recent example of growth that I can see happening in St. Chad's congregation. I do so, realizing that any good things that have happened are the result of God's work among us, and that we remain people who are in constant need of forgiveness and healing. It is all thanks to God's goodness and guidance that I have been able to be given time dedicated to address the topic of the Rule of Life and do it in the context of the congregation of St. Chad's. There were many obstacles in the way—hindrances from outside the congregation, major issues in rental space, pastoral concerns. And what I had to struggle with, other church members were also struggling with. The verses with which I began this chapter are truly a picture of where we have found ourselves. To look to Jesus every day and to be faithful in the little things is important, and this is what an ongoing reflection on the Rule of Life is all about. The parishioners have grown as we live through these struggles, all the while beginning to pay attention to the topics that the Rule of Life addresses. So as I was looking for a measurable result of the work that I have done thus far in developing the Rule of Life into the personality of the parish, I read recently something helpful said by Thom Rainer. Rainer is the head of LifeWay Christian Resources, and founder of LifeWay Research, both of which are connected to the Southern Baptist Church. He was recently speaking about discipleship and he listed a number of characteristics to look for in churches that wanted to grow in

discipleship (Rainer, 2015). He said, at the end of his list, ‘oddly, one of the lead metrics of discipleship growth in a church is giving.’ I think he is right in listing giving as an indication of discipleship growth, but I do not think it is odd to find it as such a ‘lead metric.’ I do not want this observation to be misconstrued as recommending a strong emphasis on giving. Quite the opposite. Our parish experience has been that a deliberate emphasis on spiritual maturity has resulted in financial stability and deliverance from debt. I think that the scriptures also point that out. And yet, I do not want to say that by implementing the Rule of Life congregations will immediately see giving increased. I do think there is a relationship between the growth in discipleship of church members and the financial health of the church. God gives us what we need, but not necessarily what we want, and we are to use what he gives responsibly. It is because of God’s goodness that the congregation of St. Chad’s was able to give me two months off this year to work on my Doctor of Ministry writing, and had sufficient givings also to bring in a theological student to preach nine sermons. It was because people were growing in discipleship that the necessary leadership was available to lead the parish on Sundays for the service of worship and music, and also to maintain the weekly service in the seniors’ residence, and to have ordained clergy present for the celebration of the Holy Communion. This did require a lot of planning on my part, but the reason it could happen at all was because members were growing in their faith, willing to be involved in ministry, and it showed.

Because the Rule of Life is simply stated and balanced, it encourages people to be intentional in everything that they do. This helps guard them against burnout, which sometimes happens when a person thinks that everything depends on him or herself doing it all, and even overdoing it in some areas. When an Anglican Christian assesses the past

year in terms of how the Rule of Life has informed his actions, there will be time to look at what worked and what did not work, what could be improved or changed, what is in or out of balance, what is in need of forgiveness, and what is in need of thankfulness. When I do the yearly sermon series on the Rule of Life, I always encourage people to think about that week's particular point and to pray about it, as preparation for any adjustments or changes they think God is calling them to make.

I expect that results will occur through the promotion and use of the Rule of Life, both in individual members and in the church as a whole. I already know what those results might be. They are already stated in the scriptures. When God's people heard and obeyed God's voice, they had success. When they refused to listen to him, they suffered and came under judgment. When the Word was sown in individuals' hearts, sometimes it took root and there was abundant growth, but sometimes it was choked out or rootless, and it did not last. The scriptures, from first to last, show the many ways that people receive God's Word and follow Jesus, or resist and fall away. That is what happens. But whether it is like the prophet who is commanded to proclaim even if those to whom he speaks will not hear, or the apostle who finds a wide open door of opportunity to preach the gospel, but along with it, suffering, there will always be a variety of responses. The Rule of Life is a good resource for the Anglican Christian who wants to persevere no matter in what situation she finds herself. It is a helpful standard for being Jesus' follower, in the context of the Anglican tradition, because it relates well to the picture of the early church in the Book of Acts, is connected to the development of catechism and confirmation, and is relevant to the idea that discipleship is for every Christian, for all of life and for all the time. There are other ways of growing in faith that denominations have

developed and will develop. For Anglicans, I think that the Rule of Life, reflected upon personally, and lived out in the community of a faithful parish, makes sense, and paves the way for the renewal and revival of the Anglican expression of the Christian faith, which will join with other likeminded denominations in presenting the whole gospel to those here and abroad who have often never heard it before.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

Survey of ANiC Churches re: Discipleship

From: Rev. Barbara Richardson
 St. Chad's Anglican Church, Toronto
 August 2013
 For research for a Doctor of Ministry Project

Thank you for participating in this survey.

Part I: Questions

The following 6 questions are multiple choice. Please circle your answers.

- 1) **The word 'discipleship' is widely used. How important is the development of discipleship in your ministry context?**
 - a. Very important
 - b. Important
 - c. Somewhat important
 - d. Unimportant

- 2) **What are the top three ways your parish/plant develops discipleship?**
 - a. Alpha Course
 - b. 'Christianity Explored' series
 - c. Confirmation classes
 - d. Advent course
 - e. Lenten course
 - f. New members' class
 - g. One-on-one mentoring
 - h. Sermons
 - i. Small group Bible studies
 - j. Adult Sunday School
 - k. Informal 'coffee and conversation'
 - l. Prayer walks
 - m. Book studies (Name of book _____)
 - n. Parish missions
 - o. Other _____

- 3) **I consider that the current level of our parish/plant development of discipleship is:**
 - a. Very Satisfactory
 - b. Satisfactory
 - c. Needs improvement
 - d. Unsatisfactory
 - e. In development

- 4) **How important is it to your ministry that you use Anglican resources in teaching about and developing discipleship in your parish/plant?**
 - a. Very Important
 - b. Important
 - c. Somewhat important
 - d. Unimportant

- 5) **Have you ever used the Rule of Life (p. 555, Book of Common Prayer, 1962) in your parish/plant as a pattern for teaching about discipleship?**
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

- 6) **If you answered 'yes' to question 5, have you seen measurable results in discipleship development from using the pattern of the six topic found in the Rule of Life?**
 - a. Very favourable
 - b. Favourable
 - c. Somewhat favourable
 - d. Negligible

Please answer question # 7 by circling as many as you consider to be important elements of discipleship.

- 7) **The following areas are important components of the development of discipleship in the parish/plant:**
 - a. personal evangelism
 - b. daily prayer
 - c. daily Bible reading
 - d. regular attendance at worship
 - e. regular financial giving to the work of the church
 - f. regular attendance at Holy Communion
 - g. regular giving to missions
 - h. community service (e.g. community volunteer/participant)

- i. using one's spiritual gifts for building up the parish/plant
- j. growth in Christ-likeness
- k. Other (please specify _____)

Please write short answers to the following two questions:

- 8) Read the Rule of Life (p. 555, BCP, 1962) and indicate whether or not you think that it provides an adequate framework for developing and maintaining discipleship in your parish/plant.**
- 9) In books or online, you can find many definitions of 'discipleship.' What is your parish/plant's definition of discipleship?**

Part II: Description of Parish/Plant

The following 6 questions are multiple choice. Please circle your answers.

- 1) How many years has your parish/plant been associated with the Anglican Network in Canada?**
 - a. 5 years
 - b. 4 years
 - c. 3 years
 - d. 2 years
 - e. 1 year or less
- 2) If your parish existed before the formation of the Network, for how many years?**
 - a. More than 100 years
 - b. 75 to 100 years
 - c. 50 to 74 years
 - d. 25 to 49 years
 - e. 6 to 24 years
- 3) Over the past 5 years (or less, if your parish/plant is younger than 5 years), would you say that attendance in your parish/plant is:**
 - a. Declining
 - b. Unchanged
 - c. Growing

4) **How many people are regularly involved in the life of your parish/plant?**

- a. 1-24
- b. 25-49
- c. 50-74
- d. 75-99
- e. 100 plus (Please indicate approximately how many_____)

5) **What is the predominant age range?**

- a. Birth to age 16
- b. 17 to 30
- c. 31 to 50
- d. 51 to 70
- e. Over 70

6) **What is the predominant level of education?**

- a. Elementary school
- b. Secondary school
- c. College
- d. University undergrad
- e. University grad level

Please indicate percentages for each part of question # 7.

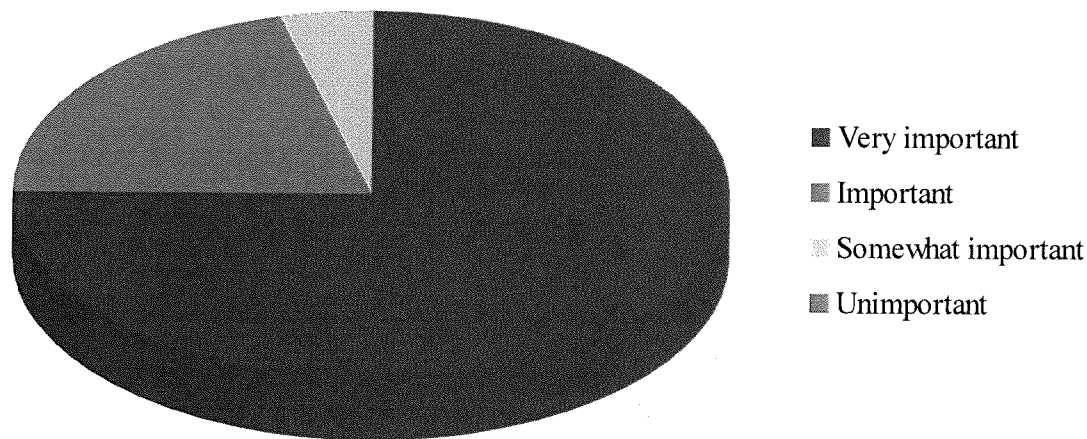
7) **What percentage of your parish/plant has ready access to:**

- a. Internet and social media _____%
- b. DVD player _____%
- c. Christian conferences _____%

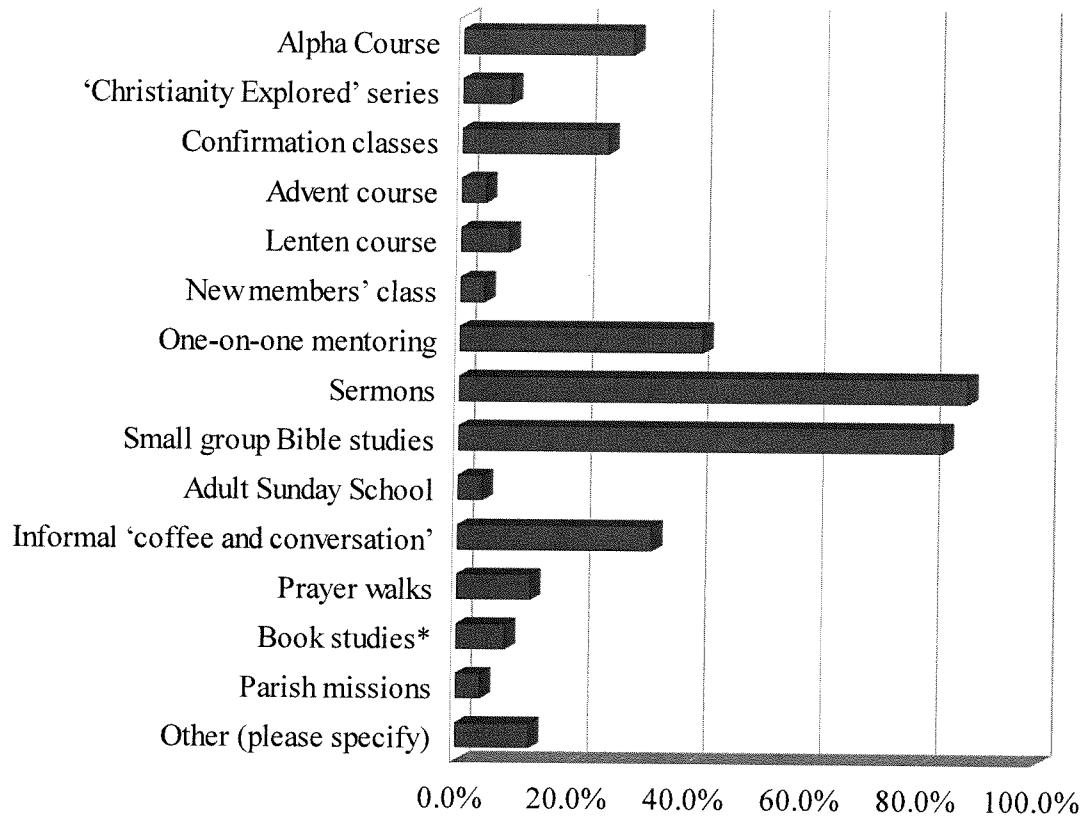
Thank you!

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

The word ‘discipleship’ is widely used.
How important is the development of discipleship in your ministry context?



What are the top three ways your parish/plant develops discipleship?



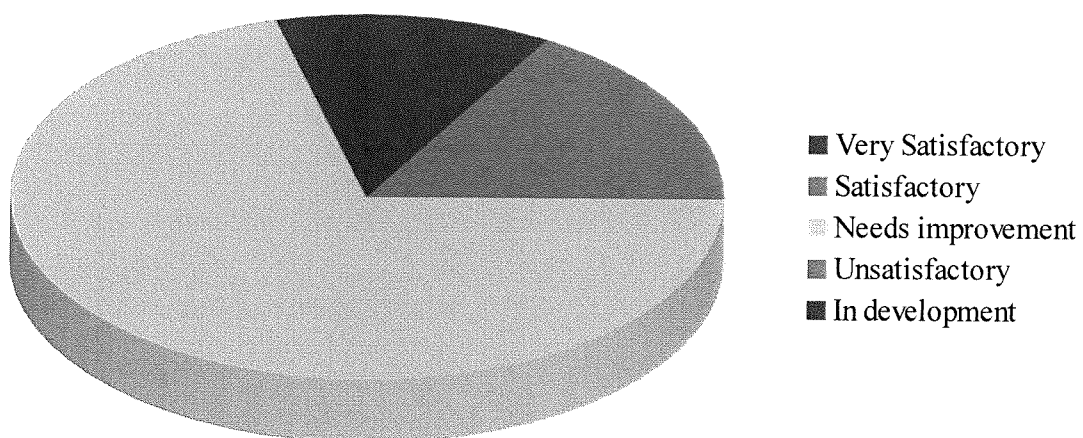
Other answers:

- Year long Catechesis courses
- Two weekly bulletin inserts. One called 'Growing in Grace' the other called 'Going Deeper'
- Christian 12 Step Recovery

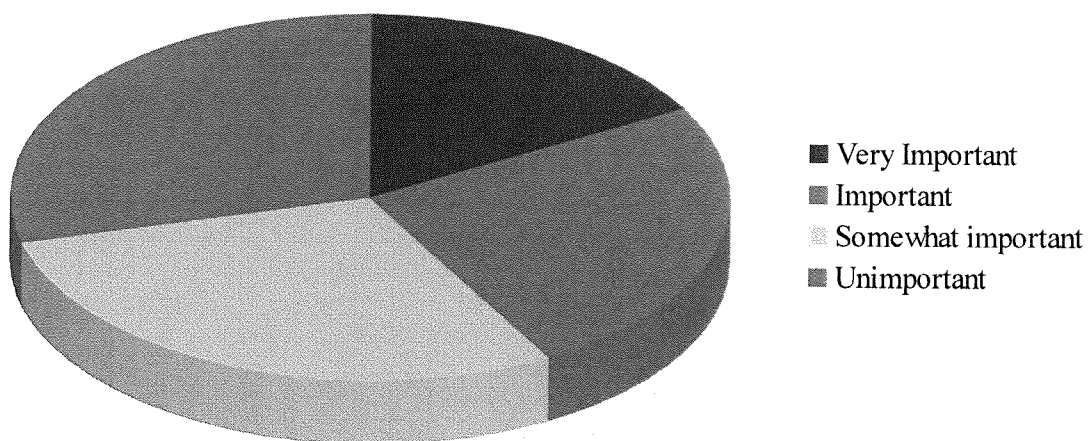
***If you answered "Book Studies" above, what is the name of each book?**

- Just walk across the room, The Case for Faith, First Christians, the Gospel and the Catholic Church
- Discipleship Essentials by Greg Ogden

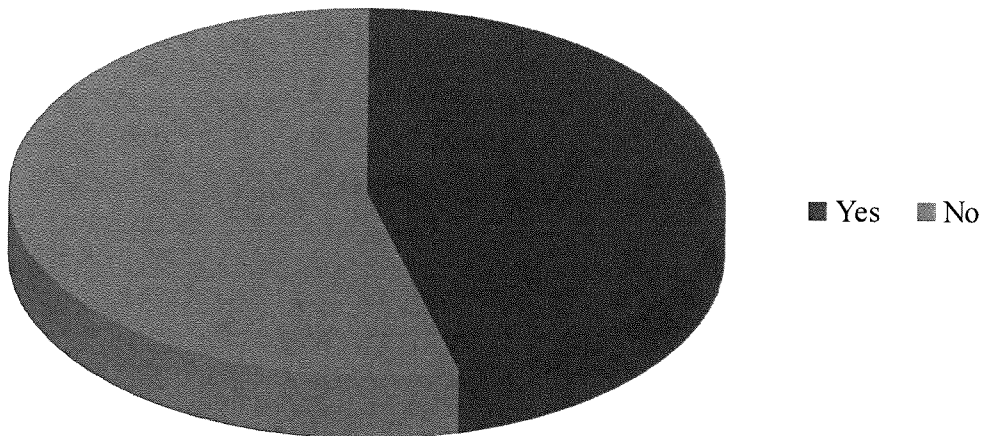
I consider that the current level of our parish/plant development of discipleship is:



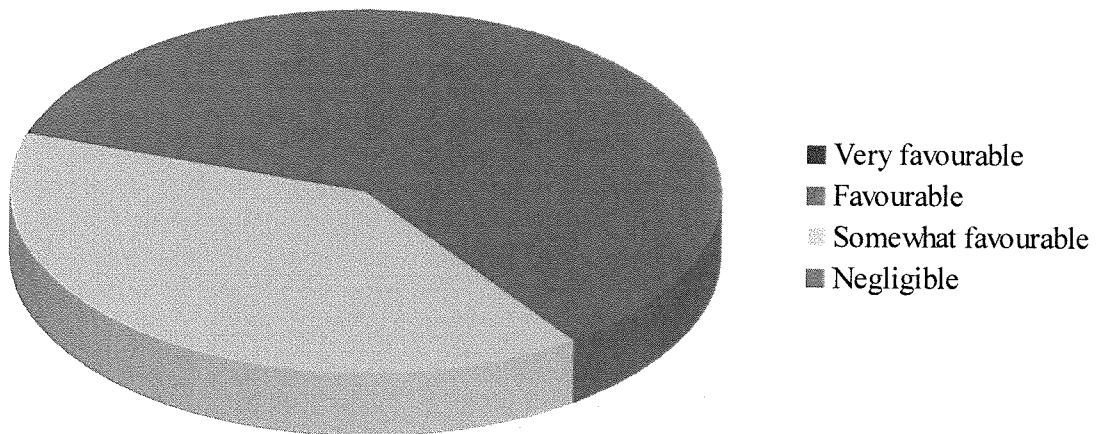
How important is it to your ministry that you use Anglican resources in teaching about and developing discipleship in your parish/plant?



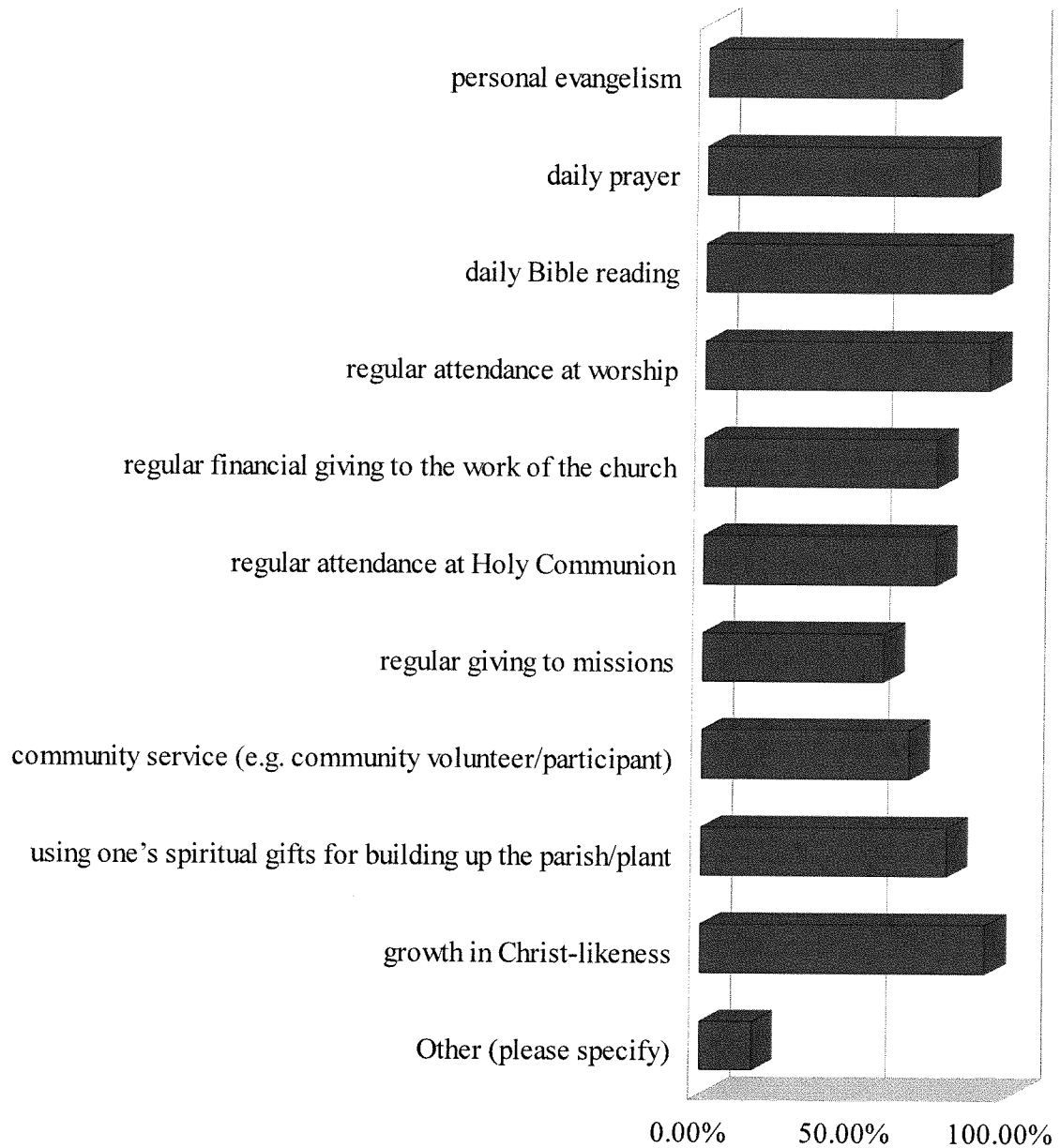
Have you ever used the Rule of Life (p. 555, Book of Common Prayer, 1962) in your parish/plant as a pattern for teaching about discipleship?



If you answered 'yes' to question 5, have you seen measurable results in discipleship development from using the pattern of the six topics found in the Rule of Life?



Which of the following areas do you consider to be important elements of the development of discipleship in the parish/plant:



Other answers:

- Regular spiritually relevant reading...but not necessarily "daily" and/or "Bible"
- Tithing, Fasting, Character & Integrity
- all are important.
- All of the above plus small group participation/mentoring

Read the Rule of Life (p. 555, BCP, 1962) and indicate whether or not you think that it provides an adequate framework for developing and maintaining discipleship in your parish/plant.

- I believe an ongoing guided study (either by attending a Bible Study group or using trusted commentaries, etc...) of the Bible would certainly aid in personal growth and discipleship. I know too many people who read Scripture but never go further or deeper than that.
- It provides an excellent framework for some important aspects of discipleship but it is not the be-all and end-all. It is an important piece of the puzzle but not the whole puzzle.
- I believe the ANiC Canons have an improvement that includes justice etc.
- Yes it does but it need to be translated into modern English and numbered as action items.
- Even though I like the various "action items" in the RULE OF LIFE, it's possible that people could fall into the trap of believing that fulfilling all these "duties" will make them a better Christian OR gain points with God. What I find is missing in the RULE OF LIFE is a statement indicating that keeping Jesus as the focus of our lives...at the centre of our lives...ensuring He is Lord over every aspect of our lives...that we commit to spending time with Him and getting to know Him more is of upmost importance. In fact, it should be the prerequisite to all that is listed. Everything in the RULE OF LIFE should "flow out of" our relationship with Jesus Christ. I believe this needs to be more clearly stated.
- It does provide a good starting point, but will probably need elaboration.
- Yes

- It does describe most key practices. I believe it is a recent compilation, and does not go back to 1662 or 1552 - but I may be wrong on this. It is 'churchy'. I think it needs to say 'weekly' church attendance in place of 'regular'. It needs to discuss spiritual gifts. It needs to talk about developing a Christian worldview. It needs to address the need for Christians to have at least one significant connection with other Christians each week. It needs to put service to Christ higher than social service to the community. It needs to emphasize our need for 'Christ-likeness' rather than just Christ's example. It needs to refer more to Jesus. It needs to de-emphasize 'church' and emphasize serving Jesus. It needs to emphasize serving and doing to bring God glory.
- Yes it is good framework if your intention is to equip church members, all ready committed to Christ but more emphasis should be placed on personal growth in evangelism to bring unchruched to Christ and then to church for disciplining.
- yes, I feel that it provides a very good framework, from which specific elements of the rule can be developed and made very relevant according to a specific cultural context.
- It provides a good framework that we should all try to adhere to
- As a framework, it is quite adequate but lacks specifics in our specific responsibility to imitate Christ.
- Yes.
- Very adequate. However, along the side of other study and reading material
- Yes, it is very relevant and speaks well to being a disciple of Christ. It can be a framework and I regret I have not given it enough thought.
- Yes I think this provides an adequate framework. Good to be reminded that the Anglican Way has good solid roots in Scripture and isn't as superficial as the liberal wing is trying to make it.
- Yes, this is adequate framework for the development and maintainance of discipleship in my project. One of the stumbling blocks in the previous churches that we came from is that the Rule of Life was not discussed which leaves the church today to re-introduce this part of the Catechism.
- The framework is adequate but not exhaustive. The language is archaic
- Yes.

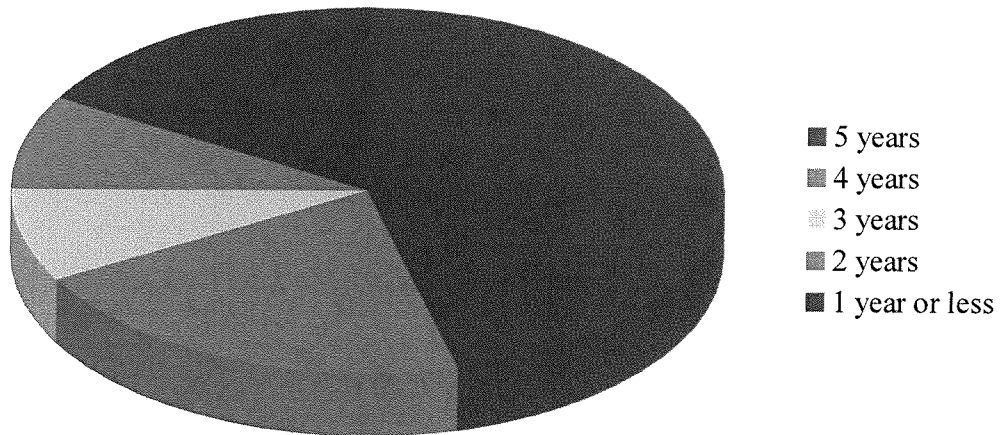
- Yes, with teaching and mentoring
- I believe it is a very adequate framework. Keeping in mind that it is predicated on knowing the "precepts of the Gospel and the faith and order of the church".

In books or online, you can find many definitions of 'discipleship.' What is your parish/plant's definition of discipleship?

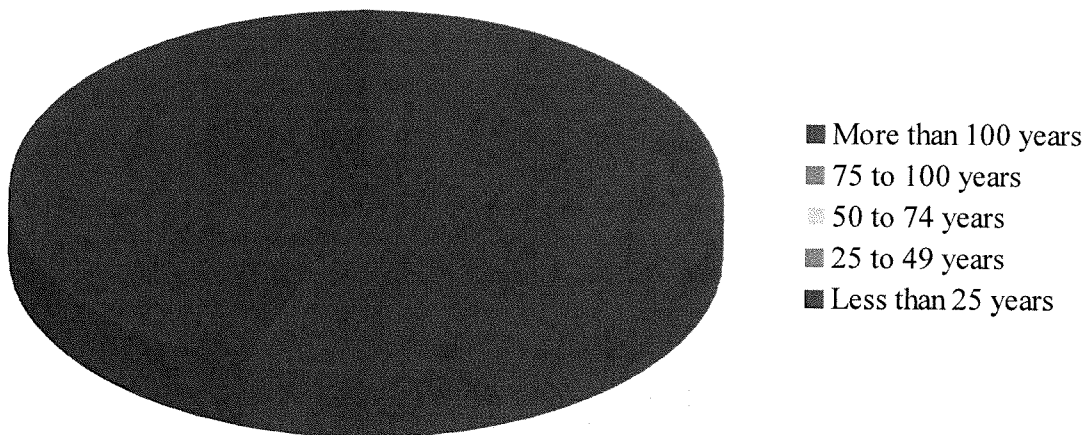
- It is walking in the fellowship of God's love made known in Jesus and then inviting our neighbours into that fellowship.
- We rely on the Holy Scriptures and the Apostolic Tradition of the church catholic. We do not rely upon everyone's individual or even group-advocated definition of discipleship.
- To share in Christ's newness of life so that his love overflows in our hearts, homes and communities.
- Our church's purpose statement is: Through the power of the Holy Spirit we are a teaching and discipling community who love Jesus and His gospel. We haven't yet, even though we are planning to do so, define what "discipleship" or "discipling" means for our parish.
- To seek, serve, and follow Christ.
- Growing closer to and more like Jesus individually and as a body
- First become a Christian. Discipleship follows conversion. Discipleship is becoming more like Jesus in thought, word and deed in our 24/7 life.
- My personal definition of discipleship is based on Matthew 29, 19 and modeled after Jesus equipping His disciples to lead others to Himself- from unbeliever to believer, to church member, to maturity in the faith, to equip for ministry according to their gift and ultimately to be on a mission as disciple-makers themselves to grow the kingdom for Christ. This is my motivation as pastor for our members. I do not feel adequate to do this but am attempting to model it.
- Discipleship means to grow in personal Christlikeness day by day through the use of accepted spiritual disciplines and thereby contributing to the growth in Christlikeness of the parish that will in turn impact for Christ the surrounding community and beyond.

- Being a student learning about Jesus. To take seriously what he taught and to live by his commands.
- Discipleship means for us to become more Christlike in our daily lives.
- Discipleship means living a disciplined Christian life. Page 555 outlines what a disciple should carefully consider in developing his/her Rule of Life.
- To follow the command to "GO"
- Discipleship involves dying to oneself, letting Christ be formed in us and seeking to serve Christ at all times and in all places.
- Intentional growing in Christlikeness, together.
- To follow Christ unconditionally and to share His good news with others in both word and action.
- To follow the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20 is the only definition, however, this has been neglected over the years and again has to be re-introduced to the community. For example: about 50 years ago in a small village (the one I grew up in) one could freely talk about the love of God and give thanks to God for what He has done. All the children were baptized and all the families in the community attended church and took part in church activities. Modernity seems to have taken hold and people have strayed so it is more difficult to stay persistent and consistent in the following of Matthew 28:19-20. It appears churches have fallen into the Great Omission and have neglected to teach the truth because they want everyone to feel included.
- Yes, online...Exponential, Church Leaders.com, discipleship Journal...etc. Our church defines discipleship as Teaching believers to love as Jesus loved, serve as Jesus served, give as Jesus gave.
- Following Jesus.
- Spiritual maturity shown in a way of life
- "Our definition of a disciple of Christ is a "person who conscientiously, as their life project, walks with him, learns from him, worships him and the Father through him, maintains obedience to him, conforming themselves to his recorded attitudes and example up to the limit of the Holy Spirit's enabling.""
-Packer & Parret, Grounded in the Gospel, Baker 2010 p. 14"

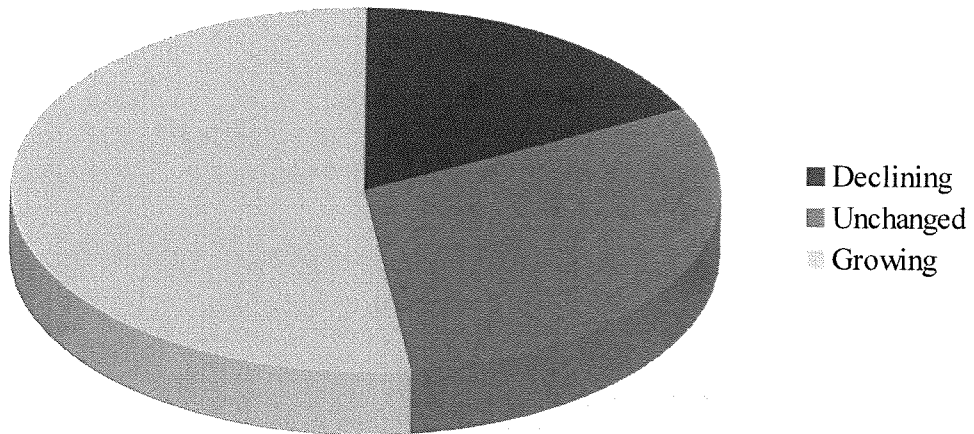
How many years has your parish/plant been associated with the Anglican Network in Canada?



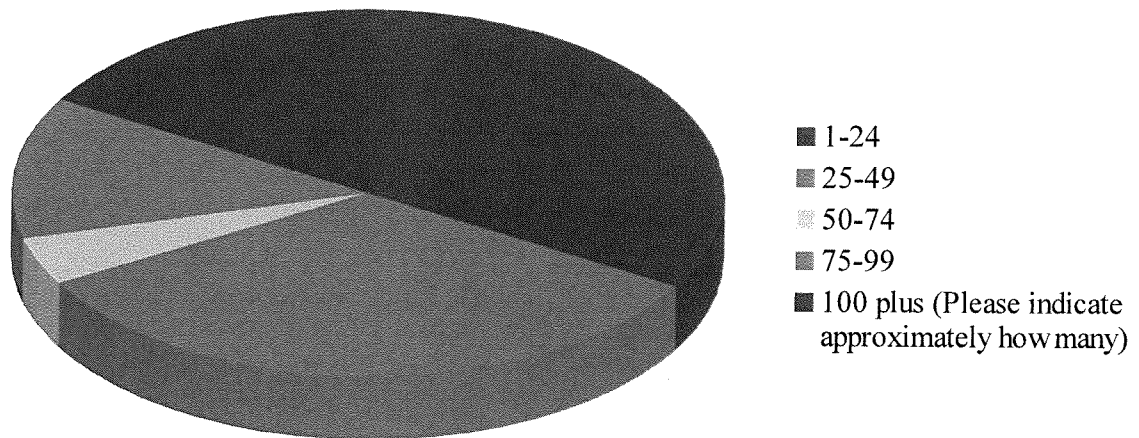
If your parish existed before the formation of the Network, for how many years?



**Over the past 5 years (or less, if your parish/plant is younger than 5 years),
would you say that attendance in your parish/plant is:**



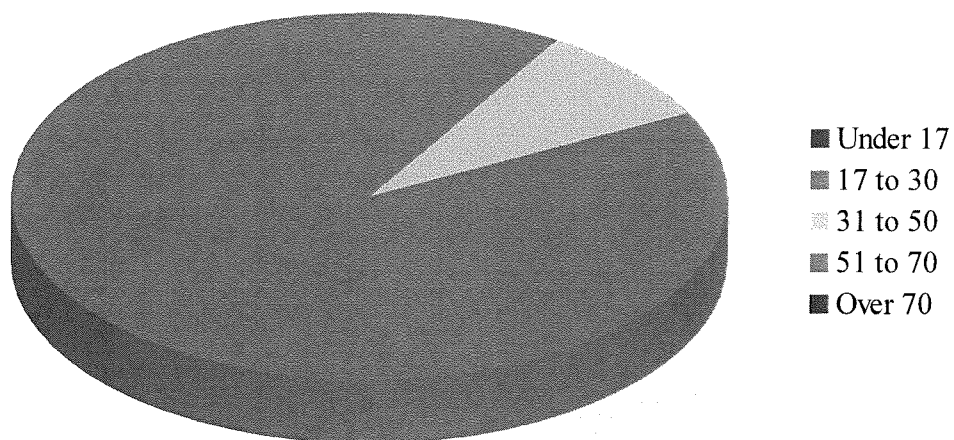
How many people are regularly involved in the life of your parish/plant?



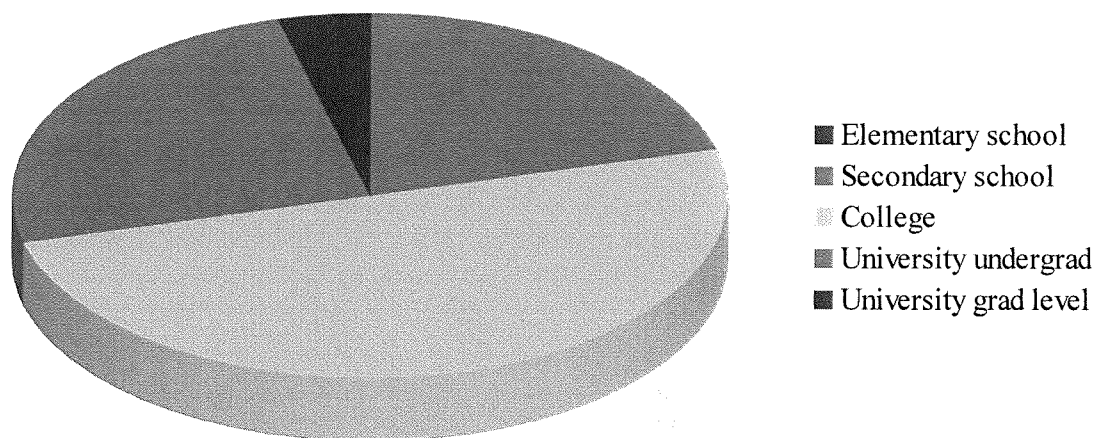
100 plus:

- 170
- 150
- 200
- 300

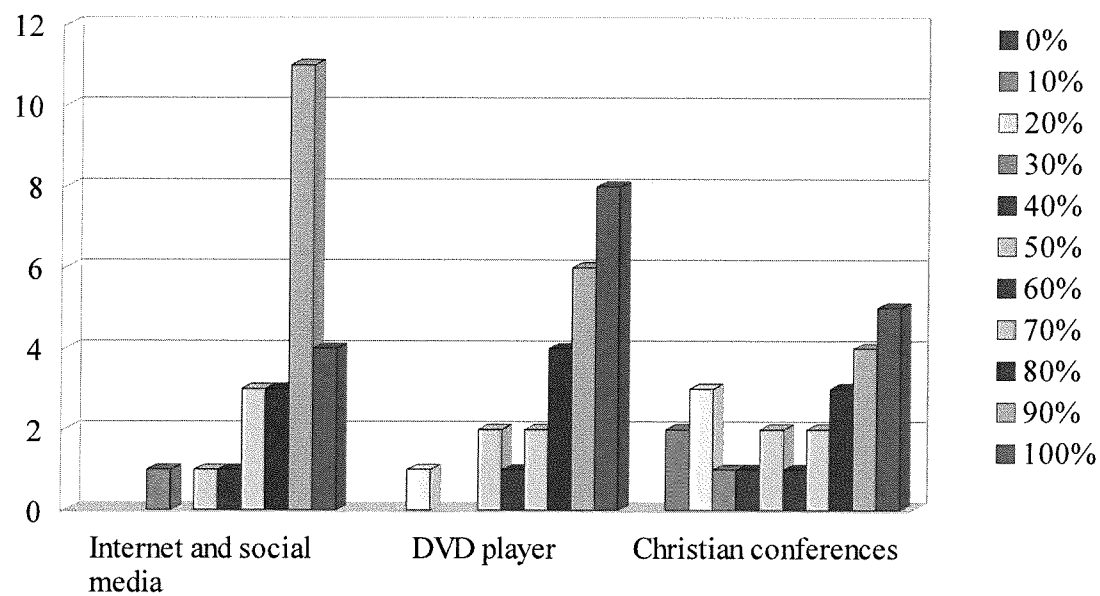
What is the predominant age range?



What is the predominant level of education?



What percentage of your parish/plant has ready access to:



APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Retreat Schedule, Continued

Wednesday Evening

5:00 p.m. Evensong

5:45 p.m. Dinner

Consultations and Confessions

8:30 p.m. Address, followed by Compline

Thursday Morning

7:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Greater Silence ends

8:15 a.m. Breakfast

9:30 a.m. Morning Prayer

10:00 a.m. Final Address

10:30 a.m. Coffee Break

10:45 a.m. Sharing

11:30 a.m. Farewells and Home

Conductor:
Bishop Charlie Masters

Faithful is He Who Calls

1 Thessalonians 5: 24

**Silent Retreat for Clergy of
Southern Ontario**

**Tuesday, April 21-Thursday
April 23**

Valley of the Mother of God
953376 7th Line EHS
Mono, ON

Welcome

May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this. (1 Thessalonians 5: 23, 24)

The Steadfast Love of the Lord

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases
His mercies never come to an end
They are new every morning
New every morning
Great is your faithfulness, O Lord
Great is your faithfulness

²² *The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end;*
²³ *they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.*
(Lamentations 3: 22-23, ESV)

Silent Retreat Schedule

Tuesday Evening

5:00 p.m. Arrive, register, rooms
6:00 p.m. Supper (a talking meal)
Followed by time for greeting and fellowship
8:00 p.m. Introductory address, followed by Compline

Following this address
the Greater Silence begins

Wednesday Morning

7:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist
8:15 a.m. Breakfast
9:30 a.m. Morning Prayer
10:00 a.m. Address
10:30 a.m. Coffee Break

Wednesday Afternoon

12 noon Mid-Day Prayers and Intercessions
for Our Parishes
12:30 p.m. Lunch
2:30 p.m. Address
3:15 p.m. Coffee Break
3:30-5:00 p.m. Consultations and Confessions

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VITA

Barbara Agnes Richardson was born in Toronto, Ontario, Canada in 1946. After high school at Humberside Collegiate Institute, she studied at Central Baptist Seminary in the Bachelor of Theology program, and also graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from the University of Toronto. She studied at Trinity College, University of Toronto, receiving a Master of Divinity degree in 1990. In the early 1990's she was Rector of the Parish of Fortune-Lamaline (Diocese of Central Newfoundland, Anglican Church of Canada) and in the early 2000's, priest in charge of the Parish of St. Chad's Earls court (Diocese of Toronto, Anglican Church of Canada). She has been Rector of the Parish of St. Chad's Toronto (Anglican Network in Canada, ACNA) from 2008 until the present. She began her studies for the Doctor of Ministry (Church Planting and Multiplication) at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Boston, USA, in 2011, and her expected graduation is May 2016.